

Walter Thompson presenting Kate with an opossum-skin rug and platypus-skin muff and tippet for her homeward voyage round Cape Horn.

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THE PIONEER OF A FAMILY;

OR,

Adventures of a Young Governess.

BY

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CHAPTER I.

"Over a shining land—
Once such a land I knew—
Over its sea, and over its sand,
The sky is all white and blue."

George Macdonald.

ONE evening in autumn, some years ago, several members of a family were seated around the tea-table in a comfortable home in one of the eastern parishes of London. There were father and mother, two boys of the respective ages of twelve and ten years, and two girls about seven and five years of age. Mr. Maysen, who was the foreman of an engineering factory at Poplar, was an intelligent-looking man about middle age—a good specimen of a British workman. His wife was a happy match for him in companionable qualities, and their home bore ample testimony to her excellent management as a housewife and as a mother. Fred and Harry were pupils in a school close by, and they had the character of being careful, plodding boys. Amy was a gentle creature, the embodiment of all that is lovable in a child; and "wee Alice, mother's darling and father's pet," was the merriest little romp that ever enlivened a home with pure infantile fun.

Usually the boys and girls had liberty to prattle in their own cheerful way at tea-time, which was the only

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leisurely meal in the day, and they seldom abused their freedom by rudeness of word or action; but if they occasionally did happen to make a mistake in their manners, an admonitory look from father was as effectual a warning as a danger signal is to the driver of a railway engine. There was a rod put away in a convenient nook, and each boy and girl knew that father would use it if he saw it was needed to preserve order in the house. But on the evening in question the children were as mute as images; and it was evident, from the serious looks of their parents, that something unusual was the matter. I will briefly explain what it was.

By that afternoon's post a letter had been received from their eldest daughter, Kate (who was a pupil-teacher in a ladies' school in Hertfordshire), containing the startling request that she should be allowed to go to Australia with a family, two daughters of which were pupils in the school where Kate was engaged. Mrs. Maysen read the letter to her husband, in the presence of the children, soon after they sat down to the tea-table; and that is the reason why father looked so thoughtful and why the boys and girls were so uncommonly quiet over their social evening meal.

Mr. Maysen was a clever mechanic. Not only was he expert in the practical parts of his trade, but he had devoted years to the study of the scientific branches of it, and he was almost as skilful at the draughting-table as he was at the bench. His employers acknowledged his ability and trustworthiness; and he was the foreman or superintendent over more than a hundred workmen. His habits of study and the responsibility of his position had taught him the expediency of weighing facts carefully in his mind before deciding on any given subject;

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so, after hearing the letter read, he did not immediately express his judgment concerning it; and his wife knew his disposition too well to press him for an opinion, much as she longed to know it. After tea was over, the children went to their rooms to study their school lessons for the next day, while father and mother sat down together to discuss the matter which had been so unexpectedly submitted to them.

"Well, Mary, what is your opinion of dear Kate's proposition?" asked Mr. Maysen. "You have had a little more time to think over it than I have, so you had better speak your mind first."

"I cannot bear the idea of parting with the dear girl," replied Mrs. Maysen. "It was a sore trial to me to let her go twenty miles from home; but to see her go away with strangers to the opposite side of the earth is almost more than I can bear to think of. It would nearly break my heart, Thomas."

"You know, love, we have seen that Kate's going to Saint Albans was a right course; for her health has derived much benefit by the change into the country, and she has improved her education and learned some accomplishments which we could not afford to pay for. May not this proposed movement be even more advantageous to her, think you?"

"Oh, my dear! I cannot give an opinion about it to-night, for feeling has got the mastery of my reason. This is such an unexpected proposal to both of us."

"It is indeed, Mary; but we ought to consider it well before we reject it. I feel as little disposed to part with the dear girl as you do; still, if I were convinced that it is right for her to go to Australia, that it is her providential course, I would not dare to stand in her way. But perhaps she had better come home for a few days;

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we shall all like to see her, and we can then learn from her something about the family with whom she proposes to go abroad, and can hear all she has to say about it. I will write at once to Kate, if you like, and bid her ask for leave of absence for awhile; and in the meantime we will pray for direction to One who has hitherto been our helper and our guide."

After a little more discussion, Mrs. Maysen sorrowfully bade her husband do what he thought was best; so he went to a room which he called his modelling shop and sat down to write to his daughter.

The children neglected their lessons that evening. Their minds were so troubled with the idea of losing their sister, whom they tenderly loved, that they could not think of anything else with fixed attention. When their books were put aside they began to exchange opinions in children's natural style on the momentous subject of Kate's projected emigration. Fred was the principal speaker, and while arguing away a little mistake of his brother as to the geographical position of New South Wales, he said,—

"It can't be so near the South Pole as you say, Harry, or it wouldn't be possible for the wild black men to go about naked, or to live in bark huts; for of course it is always freezing at the poles."

"Are there wild black men in the place where Katie is going?" asked Amy, with tremulous voice and anxious-looking face.

"Oh yes, lots of them, Amy, real savage fellows; and they throw spears and boomerangs, and sometimes knock white men's heads off with firesticks and clubs, and eat them up." Fred was of a highly imaginative turn, and he loved to create a little sensation occasionally.

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"It's a shame to let poor Katie go so far away, to a country full of savages," sobbed Harry, who had been shedding tears all the evening.

"But if father and mother say she may go, off she *will* go, you know, Harry, and we can't stop her."

"Yes, I will stop her," chirped little Alice with spirit. "I will bolt the door and hide her bonnet."

"But she can wear her hat, Alice; and she can run out by the back door while you are bolting the front one," urged Fred, with real sorrow in his heart, though he could not resist the habit of teasing.

"Oh dear, dear! she shan't go! she shan't go!" roared Harry, whose defensive arguments were exhausted, and his heart was half-broken.

"No, no! Katie shan't go to the savage land!" cried Amy and Alice, in a mournful chorus. "She shan't go away at all!"

The sorrowful outcries of the boys and girls soon brought their parents upstairs to see what was the matter. Of course mother began to weep, and father, though he was a strong-minded man, and clever enough to make a steam-engine of a thousand horse-power, could not prevent tears surging into his eyes; so to hide his emotious he hastened back to his little room, where on his desk lay the letter which he had partly written to Kate. After sitting for awhile in thoughtful silence, he muttered abstractedly,—

"How easily I might be led, if I allowed my heart to rule my head in family matters. Poor children! I am as tender as either of you; and gladly would I say with you, 'Katie shan't go away!' but it is a matter which must be viewed from other points besides a merely sentimental one. This opening for dear Kate is not a turn up of chance or luck, as some folks would call it, and it

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must be seriously considered over. She had better come home and help us to decide about it."

Mr. Maysen forthwith finished his letter to Kate in time for the evening's post; then he locked his room door, and earnestly supplicated for Divine help and guidance in the trying emergency.

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CHAPTER II.

"Conquer we shall; but we must first contend."—*Herrick.*

"THAT'S dear father's knock; let me open the door for him," said Kate exultantly, and she ran before her sisters up the hall. The next minute she was clasped in her father's loving arms.

"Why, Kate, my love! I hardly thought of seeing you to-night, so this is an unexpected pleasure," said Mr. Maysen, and he gave his daughter another kiss. "I am delighted to see you, my dear girl! How you have grown since I last saw you! It is clear enough that the pure country air agrees with you; I wish your sisters could get some of it."

I may here explain, that soon after she received the letter from home, Kate got leave of absence from the lady principal of the school, and started by the afternoon's train for London. She reached home an hour before her father returned from his workshop; and she had time for a little chat and a cry with her mother, after which they both agreed to be as cheerful as they could in the presence of the children.

When the family assembled at the tea-table, the boys and girls made full use of their liberty to talk as much as they liked; and the joy at seeing their sister again was evidenced in more ways than it is possible to explain. Quizzical Fred made some jocose remarks about Kate's ruddy looks and her improved size since she was home

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at the Christmas holidays; and said he supposed she had eaten plenty of broad beans and marrowfat peas and ripe cherries, whereupon his gentle sister, Amy, called him "a werry rude boy" to talk so, and his volatile little sister, Alice, laughed like a mocking-bird, while his susceptible brother, Harry, wept quietly, "because Katie was so good, and he loved her so much," or that was the curious explanation he gave of his tears gushing up at that lively time. Kate undertook the duty of hearing the children say their prayers, and seeing them to bed at the usual time; and when that was all done and the house was quiet, she sat down beside her father and mother, and began to tell them all she knew about the family with whom she proposed to go abroad, and for whom she evidently felt a strong affection.

"The two Miss Wiltons have been at our school for fifteen months," added Kate, after saying a good deal about the amiable qualities of those young ladies. "They were to have stayed there to finish, but their mother has lately received letters from their father in New South Wales, wishing them to pack up and start for Sydney as soon as possible, and that has made quite a sensation in our whole establishment, for we all love dear Emma and Jenny very much; they are such darling girls!"

"They must be good girls indeed, if all you say of them is correct, Kate," said Mr. Maysen, gently interrupting Kate in her further description of her young friends. "But tell us, dear, who is Mr. Wilton, and what is his calling or profession?"

"Mr. Wilton is a squatter, father."

"A squatter, my dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Maysen, with a sort of half-shocked expression of face. "What sort of calling is that?"

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"Miss Wilton told me that her father has extensive grazing lands in the far bush of Australia, and many flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. She said that gentlemen in that country who own sheep or cattle stations are called squatters. It is a funny name for them certainly, but I believe, from what Emma and Jenny has said, that squatting is a highly respectable occupation, for many nobleman's sons and nephews are squatters. Miss Weekes, our Lady Principal, says that Mr. Wilton's family are in a good position, for she knew them when they lived in Hampshire. Mrs. Wilton is a very nice lady, and I am sure you would like her, mother. She has often spoken kindly to me when she came to the school to see her daughters."

"Your mother and I are anxious to know what Mrs. Wilton has said to you about your going abroad with her and her daughters. Please to tell us all about it, Kate."

"Yes, I will, father. Mrs. Wilton came to our school three days ago, to tell Miss Weekes that she would be obliged to take her daughters away, without giving the customary notice. Mr. Wilton was unable to come to England as he had purposed to do, and it was necessary for her to return to the colony without delay. She seemed grieved at having to take her girls from the school. She stayed some time talking to Miss Weekes; and, I believe, she asked a few questions about my qualifications as a teacher. No doubt Miss Weekes' report of me was satisfactory, for I was sent for into the parlour, and Mrs. Wilton said that her daughters were most anxious that I should go to Sydney with them, and she asked me if I would like to go. Of course I could not give an answer to the question, nor did she seem to expect one, for she bade me consult my parents first of all; and if you were willing that I should go,

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she said she would see you, and that most likely a satisfactory arrangement could be made. I suppose she meant that we would be satisfied with the salary she offered and with all the other arrangements she was prepared to make with me."

"You have had several days to consider over this important matter, Kate, which is more time than your mother and I have had, so perhaps you had better give us your opinion before we say anything about it."

Kate's eyes filled with tears as she replied, "I have indeed considered over it, father, almost day and night ever since it was first named to me, and I have prayed to God to 'lead me in a right path.' My heart clings fondly to my home and the beloved ones in it; but I have a very strong impression that my going to Australia with Mrs. Wilton will be beneficial, not only to myself, but to our whole family. It does seem strange to me that I should be inclined to go so far away from home, when I remember that a year or so ago I shrunk at the idea of going to Saint Albans. But so it is, father; I am telling you exactly how I feel."

After a few minutes of pensive silence, Mr. Maysen said, "It may be your path of duty, my girl; and if so, I would not dare to turn you from it, for any personal consideration. When did you promise to give Mrs. Wilton an answer?"

"I said that I would write to her one day this week, and let her know what you and dear mother think of her kind proposal."

"Then we shall have three more days and nights for consideration. We will all think about it carefully, and on Friday afternoon we can have another little chat together, and will then decide what answer to write to the lady."

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I will not presume to report all the fireside discussions or all the private cogitations on the momentous question for the ensuing three days. Doubtless it was the leading subject of thought of each member of the family. Often their dear mother was missing from her usual household work; but no remark was made by any one, for it was well understood that she was in a quiet corner of the back room upstairs—her favourite place for retirement and prayer. On the Friday evening it was mutually agreed upon, that father and mother should see Mrs. Wilton, and hear her proposition from her own lips; they could then more easily come to a decision whether to let Kate go with her or not. Accordingly, Mr. Maysen wrote a polite note to Mrs. Wilton, inviting her to call at his house at her earliest convenience.

On the following Tuesday Mrs. Wilton and her daughters called at the house. A messenger was sent to the factory for Mr. Maysen, who promptly came home. His apology for appearing before the ladies in his working dress was smilingly accepted, and he soon felt quite at his ease in speaking to them. A short time sufficed to remove any misgivings that he or his wife may have had, as to the moral safety of their beloved girl under Mrs. Wilton's charge; and they felt satisfied also that real affection for Kate was the spring of the desire of the young ladies, that she should go abroad with them. Their amiable looks quite won Mrs. Maysen's heart at first sight.

"I naturally feel loath to part with my dear girl," said Mrs. Maysen in a sorrowful tone, after a few preliminary remarks from Mrs. Wilton. "It would be such a very wide separation for us."

"I can understand your feelings, Mrs. Maysen. They are similar to what my dear mother experienced

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when I first thought of going to Australia. She was very reluctant to part with me; but she afterwards rejoiced to know that the thorough change was beneficial to me in various ways. I had been under medical treatment for several years: my lungs were weak if not actually diseased, but I soon regained strength in the genial climate of Australia, and I have enjoyed good health ever since. In wishing you to entrust me with the responsibility of Miss Maysen, I own that my motive to some extent is a selfish one—for my daughters will be much grieved if she does not go with us; but from what Miss Weekes told me, I certainly believe that Kate will enjoy better health abroad than she usually does in England, in the winter season especially. Australia is a delightfully mild climate; and as the country is becoming rapidly populated by a respectable class of free emigrants, social comforts are more obtainable than they were a few years ago."

"Will you please to tell me in what capacity you intend Kate to go with you?" asked Mr. Maysen.

"I wish her to go as governess and companion to my daughters. It is true she is not much older than them, but she has had the advantage of a thorough elementary training at school, which they have unfortunately missed. I do not expect that she will engage to complete their education; but she is quite competent to instruct them for the next two years: then, if circumstances permit, I shall get a competent finishing governess for them in the colony, and Kate shall have the advantage of her tuition, if she chooses to stay in my family. I regret to say, that owing to recent mishaps, which I need not explain to you, I cannot offer Kate so good a salary as I should otherwise be willing to give; but I will pay all her expenses to Sydney, in the ship with me, and she

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shall share our home, when we get there, with my dear girls. I will offer her thirty pounds a year to begin with, and I promise you that when I can afford it I will increase her salary."

"Oh my! what do you think, Harry? The lady says she will give Katie thirty pounds a year wages!" exclaimed Fred, who had been standing inside the parlour doorway since the arrival of the visitors, but had become so much overcome by the liberality of Mrs. Wilton that he could not control his feelings. He skipped into the dining-room to tell his brother and sisters the astounding news. "Only fancy, Amy! thirty golden sovereigns every year! A lot of money, isn't it? Katie isn't worth it."

"Yes, she is worth twice as much," said Harry boldly.

"Oh yes, so she is—worth ten times as much, Harry; but I mean to say, that if the lady would give me only half as much, I'd go with her now directly—in these old boots."

"You are a very naughty boy, Fred," said sister Amy, with a mildly reproving look.

No doubt father and mother thought that thirty pounds a year was a liberal salary for a young girl who was merely a pupil teacher; but money was not much of a consideration with them at that exciting time. They apologized to Mrs. Wilton for troubling her with so many questions about the social and religious, as well as the physical, condition of Australia (which was at that time comparatively an unknown land); but she told them, with winning affability, that she would give them every information in her power, and they need not fear that they were over-taxing her patience. She further told them that she purposed to sail for Sydney in about three weeks, and said they had better take another week to

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think over her proposal, and there would then be ample time to get Kate's outfit ready, if they agreed to let her go. The interview lasted for several hours, and it was finally arranged that Mr. Maysen should give Mrs. Wilton a definite reply to her offer within the time she specified.

For the ensuing week, father was very thoughtful and mother was unusually sad. Sister Amy said she could not sing because something was sticking in her throat; and little Alice sometimes forgot to laugh, and would suddenly cry out with tearful overflow, "Katie shan't go away!" Fred for a while lost his quizzical disposition, or his keen relish for sly fun; and often at night he and tender-souled Harry sobbed themselves to sleep, after discussing the important question whether their sister should go away or not. But at the week's end it was decided by father and mother that Kate should go to Australia; and then the sorrow and wailing of the children reached a climax not very easy to describe.

Kate could not but feel deeply affected by the tears and the tender entreaties of her brothers and sisters. To leave them and her dear parents was a sad wrench to her heart; but a fixed idea, that it was right for her to go, seemed to nerve her for every obstacle in her way. And faith in Divine guidance and protection urged her onward in her purpose, when her drooping heart suggested that she would be more comfortable and more free from personal risk if she remained in her own home and in the society of those who were near and dear to her.

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CHAPTER III.

"The roughest road often leads to the smoothest fortune."—*Franklin.*

ENGLISHMEN who have lived many years in New South Wales (old colonists, as they are termed), have doubtless often recalled that epoch in their life's history—their tedious voyage to Sydney, forty or fifty years ago; and as they gaze admiringly at the lofty clipper ships and magnificent steamers, which now line the quays or grace the anchorage of Port Jackson, they cannot help contrasting the symmetrical bulkiness of those floating palaces, with the slow-sailing, comfortless little vessels of earlier days. If the sea experience of such persons began in the steerage or in the 'tween decks of a crowded emigrant ship, they will recall,—perhaps with longings for their bygone appetite,—the tantalizing odours which waved through the cuddy windows at dinner time, and how little those savory fumes tended to increase their zest for the hard salt beef or the fat mess pork and the very coarse brown biscuit which were their unvarying daily fare. But even if they had the better luck to be cabin passengers, they can hardly fail to remember that they had to endure many privations, of which young voyagers now-a-days have no conception. Who ever heard of a condensing apparatus for making fresh water on board one of those ancient craft? But who has not at times been half-stifled with the mal-odour of a newly

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opened cask of London river water? No sensitive person could possibly forget that very peculiar fume, although he then hoarded the precious water as carefully as if it were prime old wine. "Thames water for ever!" was a common boast of old sailors. At first I used to think it was an ironical saying of theirs, and meant that the water would be putrid for ever; but that was a mistake of mine, for after a few days' exposure to the air it would get better. Any way, I used to take my daily allowance thankfully, and I have often thirsted for more than I could get, when our lazy old ship was rolling about in a tropical calm.

Brigs or barques of from 300 to 500 tons burthen, were the sort of vessels that traded between England and Sydney forty or fifty years ago; and it was an unusual occurrence for ships of a heavier tonnage to be seen in Sydney cove. Then five, six, or even seven months' passages were not rare; indeed, I have listened to the exciting story of a respectable old colonist, of his voyage from London to Sydney in 1835, which extended over nine months, and he was very glad when it ended. There are doubtless disagreeables inseparable from a long sea voyage (besides sea-sickness), and it always will be so; but passengers in the large clipper ships which now-a-days plough the ocean everywhere, or in the gigantic steamers which rush across to Australia in forty days, would better appreciate their conveniences if they could but faintly realize the discomforts which were attendant on a five months' voyage in one of the old tub-built ships of two generations ago.

The *Nautilus*, a barque about 500 tons burthen, was the favourite passenger vessel in the Sydney and London trade at the date when my story begins—1840. Mrs. Wilton and her daughters voyaged to England in that

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ship; and it was a gratification to them to find that the *Nautilus*, with the same experienced old captain, was again laid on for Sydney, so the two stern cabins were engaged for them and Kate.

The ship was advertised to sail at the end of September, so there was only a fortnight for Kate and her mother to prepare a necessary outfit. What a time of busy excitement that was! How many tears were shed over those garments which mother's active needle was making for her darling daughter! And how many dreary forebodings haunted poor mother's heart, that she would never see her beloved one again until the sea should give up its dead! How seriously father looked on, from time to time, at the busy operations! and how often he turned away to prevent his feelings from venting themselves in an outburst of sorrow! The feelings of brothers and sisters were variously manifested. Tender Harry would sit for hours together by his sister's side, begging her in pathetic tones not to go so very far away from home. Frisky Fred was equally affectionate, if less gushing. Gentle Amy was busy from morning till night each day, in making little souvenirs for Kate. And frolicsome Alice was as pensive as a sick canary, and her rag doll was left in a corner quite neglected.

Before I go any further with my story, I will briefly describe Kate Maysen and the kind friends with whom she was about to voyage to the antipodes. Kate was tall and graceful in figure, and showed promise of developing into a handsome woman. She was about seventeen years of age. She had light auburn hair, blue eyes, and the clear rosy complexion which is peculiar to healthy English girls. Her happy, placid face indicated that she had an amiable disposition. She had been her mother's companion and helper, and had never slept a

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night away from the parental roof, until she went to the school at St. Albans. It was a sore trial for both mother and father to part with her then; but the prospect of her acquiring accomplishments which it was out of their power to procure for her in any other way, reconciled them to the trial. They were willing to make any sacrifice for her good, and Kate dutifully appreciated their consideration. Her mother's frequent expression,—"Kate is a good girl!" was not merely a partial maternal opinion.

Mrs. Wilton was an accomplished lady, and of a kindly disposition, which might inspire any parents with confidence in entrusting a young daughter to her care and guardianship. She had come to England partly for the benefit of her health; and intended to remain until her daughters had finished their education; but circumstances made it expedient for her to return to Australia without delay. Her eldest daughter, Emma, was a remarkably intelligent-looking girl, and thoughtful beyond her years. She was a little over fourteen years of age. She had bright hazel eyes, dark hair, a finely-formed face, and a brow which indicated superior mental qualities. Her mother found Emma an invaluable helpmate, as well as a devoted nurse in times of weakness,—in short, Emma Wilton was a woman when her thoughtful energies were called into action, but at other times she could enjoy a bit of fun with her merry sister, Jane, and might even be mistaken for a complete romp by a careless observer of her character. Jane Wilton was about twelve years of age, and one of the merriest little maids that ever dressed a doll. She had blue, laughing eyes, wavy, light-brown hair, a pretty, pouting mouth, a sunny complexion, and a clever-looking head. But she was not ond of study, and she required more persuasive pushing

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to keep her at work than her sister did. She used to say—in a playful way—that she believed music was invented by "old Mischief" himself, on purpose to teaze little girls, and she would sooner go and help their maid Biddy make butter in the dairy, than go to her music practice at the piano. For all that, Jenny was the most lovable, unselfish little girl in the world; and cold indeed would be the nature of any one who did not love her, when they knew her intimately. To crown all the good qualities of Emma and Jane, I may add, that they used to agree together as harmoniously as two little yellow chickens.

It is no wonder that Kate should have grown strongly attached to her young pupils, though she had sometimes declared that Jenny was the worry of her life, because she would not learn her lessons. Mere monetary considerations would never have induced Kate to leave her parents and her home to go abroad; but her affection for the two girls and their amiable mother, and her confidence in their attachment to her, reconciled her to a course which she had a settled impression would turn out much to her advantage. I have, as briefly as possible, described the persons with whom Kate had agreed to cast in her lot; and if the reader does not think they were a desirable family to live with, I have failed in my efforts to induce a correct impression.

At length the time drew near for Kate to begin her long voyage. Her luggage had all been taken on board the ship in the London Docks, and carefully secured in her cabin by her father. It was arranged that Kate should join the ship at Gravesend, and her parents were going to see her off. On the night before the embarkation, poor Mrs. Maysen was almost inconsolable. For several days she had been in a very depressed state of

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mind, owing to an increasing impression she had that she should never see her beloved daughter again on earth. Her husband tried all the power of his strong mind to reason away her gloomy presentiment; but his logic and his loving entreaties were alike ineffectual.

"I believe it is right for Kate to go away, love," Mrs. Maysen sadly remarked, "and because I think it will be for her good I am willing to give her up; but I cannot help fearing that I shall never again behold her with mortal eyes, neither can I account for this sorrowful foreboding. You know I am not often disposed to encourage dismal fancies, Tom, so pray do not blame me for this weakness, which I cannot possibly conquer."

Mr. Maysen replied in a few soothing words, and then he resolved not to say any more about it for the present. He knew that his wife had been working early and late for the last fortnight in getting Kate's outfit prepared, and that would naturally tend to depress her. "She will soon get over this fear that she will not see our dear girl again. She is not one to indulge sentimental whims," he thought; and he tried to look as if he were quite cheerful, amidst the sorrowful little family circle.

The next day Kate and her parents went on board the *Nautilus* at Gravesend. Mrs. Wilton and her daughters were on board, and they received Kate with affectionate warmth. It is needless to prolong the tender parting scene, or to describe the bustle and confusion that prevailed all over the ship. The crew were singing "Cheerily O!" as they hove up the anchor, but the words seemed to mock poor Kate's dreary heart. Mrs. Maysen hugged her darling girl to her breast again and again, as they stood near the gangway. Mr. Maysen had given Kate a parting embrace, and was standing on the ladder trying to check the impatience of the

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boatmen alongside, who urged him to get into the boat, as the steam-tug was going to turn ahead. When the anchor was apeak it was quite time to go, so father and mother descended into the boat, leaving poor weeping Kate leaning over the taffrail, with Emma and Jane Wilton beside her, trying to console her.

Two days afterwards the pilot was discharged at the Land's End, and the *Nautilus* filled her sails and sped on her voyage to Sydney.

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CHAPTER IV.

"But hushed be every thought that springs
From out the bitterness of things."—*Wordsworth.*

"My poor Katie!" was the first sorrowful exclamation of Mrs. Maysen, when she returned to her home with her husband, after bidding adieu to their beloved daughter. "My precious girl is gone, and I shall never see her dear kind face again!"

Mr. Maysen's grief was not so manifest, though it was perhaps equally poignant. For some minutes he dared not trust his tongue to utter a sentence; but he presently saw that his wife was becoming hysterical, so he gently said to her, "Mary, dear, do endeavour to let reason and conscience control your sorrow. You know that we have deeply pondered this matter before letting our beloved girl go away, and we have both felt assured that it was right for her to go. We have committed her to the care of the Almighty, and now we must trust in Him. Let us hope that the separation, painful as it is to us now, will be beneficial to dear Kate, and perhaps to her brothers and sisters also. We have known several instances of a son or daughter going to a foreign land, and being the means of opening a way for a whole family to follow. It may be so in our case; but whether or not, we have good reason to hope that it will be for Kate's own benefit." He then sat down quietly beside his sobbing wife, and after a while the tumult of grief

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subsided, and she became calmly resigned to what she believed was the will of God.

Mr. and Mrs. Maysen were a devoted couple, whose mutual aim was to study each other's happiness, and to rear up their children in the right way. They had received a careful early training themselves, so they knew the value of it; and they wisely resolved that their children should have a good home training and the best education they could afford to give them. If Thomas Maysen had been a general provision merchant, the public might have bought wares at his shop without dread of being slowly poisoned by adulteration; and any customer might rely that there were no known flaws or defects of slovenly workmanship in the machinery that was turned out of the factory where Thomas was foreman. His conscientious oversight was understood by the mechanics under him, and it made them careful. A few years before, Mr. Maysen was chief engineer of an ocean steamer; and one day a passenger on board, when speaking of a disaster which had recently befallen another steamer in the same line, put this question to him: "How is it, Mr. Maysen, that you seldom have any breaks-down with your machinery?"

"I suppose it is because I do not let my machinery get weak enough to break at its work, if I can help it. If it is beginning to be weakened by wear and tear, and I have any doubt of its safety, I usually break it myself and then mend it, or else replace it with new gear. *'It will stand for another trip,'* has caused many a sad mishap."

"You mean to say, you look well after your gear, and that is the secret of your seldom having any mishaps?"

"Yes, sir, that's the simple fact; and if every engineer and every coachsmith would act in the same common-

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sense way, we should not so often hear of accidents to passengers, either at sea or on shore."

* * * * * *

"Why do you keep on crying, Harry? I cannot get a wink of sleep!" thus expostulated Fred Maysen, some time after he and his brother had retired to bed on the day of their sister's departure.

"Because poor Katie's gone away!" sobbed Harry.

"Yes, we all know she is gone away, and I'm as sorry for it as you are; but what is the use of keeping on crying about it? I want you to be quiet and let me go to sleep. Ah now, Harry! it's wicked of you to say you can't be quiet, for you know you can if you try to, so that's a story."

"Then you try to be quiet and leave me alone, Fred."

"Oh, Harry, I'm shocked! you can't be a good boy, if you tease your brother and stop him from sleeping, and you know where bad boys go to. How can I say my lessons to-morrow if you keep me awake all night?"

"Poor Katie! poor Katie!" was Harry's only response to his sleepy brother's appeal. His tender heart was overcharged with grief at the loss of his sister, and Fred's peculiar logic was as powerless to assuage it as it would be to stop a hailstorm. But grief sometimes tires itself out, and presently Harry sobbed himself to sleep.

Some time after midnight, Mrs. Maysen was aroused by an unusual noise in the boys' room; and on going in she saw Harry sitting up in the bed, and his brother trying to persuade him to lie down and be quiet. "What is the matter? Harry, my darling! What has disturbed you?" she asked soothingly.

"A wild black man was running after me, ma."

"You have been dreaming, my child."

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"Yes, ma, he is dreaming," said Fred, who was rubbing his sleepy eyes. "There are no wild black men in this country. I told him so two or three times, but he won't stop crying."

"I think you have been exciting him with some of your whimsical fancies, Fred. Brother has been telling you some stories, hasn't he, Harry?"

"Yes, ma. He told me about old Wooloomooloodle and Mudgee-coogee, the black fellows, eating snakes and bandicoots."

"Oh, Harry! I'm astonished at your being afraid of that nonsense. I was only in fun."

"Hush, Fred! It is not kind of you to tell your brother such things, when you know he is grieving about his sister going away, and he is unusually excited. Don't be afraid, Harry. Let me hear you say part of that nice little hymn Katie taught you."

"Yes, ma," said Harry, in a more cheerful tone, and he began to say the first two lines of the well-known nursery hymn :—

"Gentle Jesus! meek and mild,
Look upon a little child!"

He repeated the lines several times, while his mother stood silently by. Presently, seeing that he was quite composed, she returned to her bed.

About half an hour afterwards, Mr. Maysen awoke, and hearing a voice in the adjoining room, he went in to see what was the matter. Harry was lying down in bed, and was still slowly repeating the two first lines of his favourite hymn, while his brother was sleeping soundly by his side. It had evidently soothed all Harry's fears of evil surroundings.

"Harry, my son! are you frightened?" asked his father tenderly.

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"No, father, I am not frightened now.

"Gentle Jesus! meek and mild,
Look upon a little child!"

Mr. Maysen returned to his bed, leaving Harry saying over and over again the words of the hymn which had given him comfort in his hours of darkness and terror. "Poor Harry!" sighed Mr. Maysen, "what a peaceful world this would be, if all mankind possessed your simple faith in Jesus, and in His power to help and comfort in times of need."

The blank in the household caused by the departure of Kate was painfully noticed throughout the week. The topic of conversation at each meal was the dear absent one; and various were the speculations as to where she was and what she was doing: whether the ship was speeding along with a fair wind, or battling with an adverse gale; and many were the expressed wishes of the children, that they could take Katie out of the ship again, and keep her at home as long as she lived.

"I wish I had a good long rope tied to the ship's tail, wouldn't I pull hard!" said Harry, in his usual deliberate tone, while his large blue eyes were expressive of loving earnestness.

"Pooh! that would be no good, Harry," rejoined Fred, "you couldn't stop the ship; but it would pull you into the sea, and you would very likely be gobbled up by a shark with jaws as wide as our back gate."

The mention of a fish with such an enormous swallowing capacity, made Amy and Alice shudder, and a spirited debate ensued between the boys, with reference to the risk Kate would incur in crossing the ocean to Australia. Fred boldly asserted that there were whales

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big enough to upset a ship; in proof whereof he produced a story book with several old-fashioned wood-cuts, which were apparently designed by the artist to scare children from the sea; at any rate, they were calculated to give false or exaggerated ideas of the size of the fishes or animals they represented. One clumsily executed wood cut showed a whale crushing a ship's long-boat with its jaws, and another cut showed a shark with a mouth as large as a corn sack, and most unnatural-looking teeth. Harry and his sisters were becoming alarmingly convinced of the risk Kate ran of being mortally injured by the monsters of the deep, when their father came into the room, and allayed their fears by explaining to them, in an intelligible way, that there was little or no danger to be apprehended from the attacks of fish or sea animals on a ship.

"It is true, my dears, that some black whales have jaws large enough to crush a small boat, and a whale has sometimes run foul of a ship—by accident; a sword-fish has also been known to drive its sword through a ship's planking; but such cases are very rare. I have been several voyages to sea, and have never been attacked by a fish; and I trust dear Katie will be saved from all such mishaps. I do not know where you got that marvellous book, Fred," added Mr. Maysen, "but you had better give it to me, and I will put it where I should like to put every other book in the world that is of an absurd or a pernicious character. When I can spare time I will make you some drawings of sharks and whales, which will give you a truer idea of their size than you can get from those ridiculous old wood-cuts. And please to remember, Fred, that I wish you in future to show me any story books you may have lent to you, before you read them; because reading such a book as this one is

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worse than mere waste of time, for it will give you incorrect ideas of natural objects, and may help to fill your mind with a dread of things that are comparatively harmless."

Happily for the boys and girls of this enlightened age, they are not dependent on the distorted fancy of ignoramuses for pictures of natural history. Art and science have provided them with finished drawings and descriptions, which will give them clear and correct ideas of objects as they really exist in the world of nature. And well would it be for the future happiness and usefulness of children—all the world over—if every parent would carefully scrutinize the story books which find their way into the nursery; for it is deadly certain that there are millions of books in circulation which are infinitely more mischievous to young hearts and intellects, than the stupid picture book which Mr. Maysen took from his lively boy, Fred, to put into the fire.

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CHAPTER V.

"Calms appear when storms are past."—*Dryden.*

THE excitement and bustle consequent on her preparation for the voyage, had left Kate very little time for serious reflection; and it was only when the ship had left the land and the voyage was fairly begun, that she could realize the novelty of her position and her loneliness. Her first week's experience at sea, will probably be among the last things that will fade from her memory. She had never before been beyond a few hours' journey from her parental home, and could always insure her kind mother's sympathy and counsel in any matter that affected her welfare. But now the separation from all tender home ties almost mastered her fortitude. Added to her mental distress was the misery of sea-sickness; and who can wonder that Kate should ardently wish she could return to her home and her relatives, never more to leave them.

"Oh, Miss Jenny! You will surely think me ungrateful; but I am not able to express my thanks for your kind care and attention," said Kate one day to her kind friend, Jane Wilton, who had been untiring in her efforts to cheer and comfort her sea-sick friend.

"No, indeed, I do not think you ungrateful, Miss Maysen, but I think you are the most patient young lady I ever saw. If I were going away from my home and my dear mamma, into a world full of strangers, I

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should cry my eyes sore even though I were as well as I am now; but if I were sea-sick, as you are,—ugh! Oh dear me! I know I should be wickedly cross; and if anybody only looked twice at me, I should be ready to scratch and scold them. Now let me thump your pillow again, and make it softer for your poor aching head."

"Thank you, Jenny. Oh my! sea-sickness is very weakening."

"I dare say it is, dear. I haven't tried it yet, but I'm sure I shouldn't like it. My patience! if it only made me half as fidgety and noisy as that Miss Crossby, in the next cabin, I do think I would almost as soon be tossed overboard out of the way, as live to be a nuisance. I must say you are the quietest passenger in the ship, except my dear mamma, and she seldom complains of anything—either at sea or on land."

"Is the ship sailing fast, Jenny?"

"Oh, yes, indeed! She is skimming along beautifully. We are half-way across the dreadful Bay of Biscay, that we have heard so much about, and I haven't seen a wave higher than a gooseberry bush. We are going to have a fortunate voyage, I hope. But what do you think, dear? I went upon the poop a little while ago, to ask the captain how many miles the ship had run since yesterday at noon, to enter it in my log-book, when a wicked-looking little midshipman told me that I had sea legs."

"I have heard my father say that it is a common remark on shipboard, that persons 'have got their sea legs' when they are able to walk about briskly and are not upset by sea-sickness, as I am now," responded Kate, who, ill as she was, could not but be amused at the serio-comical expression on Jenny's pretty face. "But it is rather bold of the young midshipman to speak to you in that way, Jenny, and perhaps you had better

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not go on deck again, until your mamma or I can go up with you."

"Oh, won't I go though! Bless you, dear, I am not afraid of anybody—not I indeed! If that saucy little sea monkey presumes to speak to me again, I'll hurt his feelings. I'll give him a look sharp enough to cut the gold buttons off his jacket—I know how to do it." Jenny then put herself into a defensive attitude, and at the same time she looked so irresistibly comical that Kate was forced to smile.

"That's right, Miss Maysen; I'm glad I can make you laugh. I have heard say that if you can only keep merry you will never be sea-sick. I wish you would try the experiment while I run and see if I can put a spark of liveliness into dear mamma and Emma."

"You are a funny girl, Jenny. What a good thing it is that you are so well, and so willing to cheer and wait upon your helpless friends."

"It would be an uncomfortable world to live in if everybody was sea-sick, wouldn't it, dear? Now you lie still till I come back with some lemonade for you." Then away skipped Jenny into her mother's cabin.

In about a fortnight most of the passengers had recovered from their sea-sickness, and they began to be sociable. Though Kate continued to grieve in secret at her separation from her beloved relatives at home, she did not weary her good friends around her with unavailing lamentations. She found Mrs. Wilton a very kind lady, and one whose advice was at all times acceptable, for it was given in a loving, motherly way.

"It is quite natural for you to feel sorrow at leaving your home, my dear," said Mrs. Wilton one day, when Kate had unbosomed her grief to her sympathizing friend. "It would show a lack of sensibility if you did

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not feel painful yearnings for the dear ones you have left behind you. At the same time, your own judgment will warn you not to yield overmuch to regrets. You know, dear, that your good parents thought very seriously before deciding to entrust you with me; and I assure you, I pondered it well before I accepted the responsibility. Doubtless you thought deeply over it, and we all sought direction from the Most High. Now, considering all that, Kate, I think it is unwise to indulge feelings of positive regret at the irrevocable step you have taken; besides, you have good reasons for hoping that it may be conducive to your best interests in life."

"Yes, Mrs. Wilton! I do still believe that I have taken a right course, and I am very grateful to you; but—but I feel weak and low-spirited this morning, and——" poor Kate's sobs and tears explained the rest.

Mrs. Wilton kissed the weeping girl, and said tenderly, "I understand your feelings pretty well, dear; but there is One who knows them infinitely better than I do. You should pour all your sorrows into the willing ear of your Almighty helper. In all my concerns, it is my daily practice to ask for God's guidance. Nothing is too insignificant for me to ask direction about. I use all the efforts I am capable of to carry out my plans, in the way I deem to be right, and then I trust God for the result. I will not say that I never bestow an anxious thought as to the success of my plans, for it is human-like to be anxious, and we cannot at all times thoroughly obey the Divine injunction to 'be careful for nothing. But I strive as much as I can to prevent anxious thoughts from troubling me; and the most effective way to do that, I find, is to keep my mind exercised in some useful way, or diverted by some innocent amusement."

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After hearing a little more of that soothing kind of advice, Kate went to her cabin, much comforted. "I think I can now see the cause of Mrs. Wilton's uniform placidity of disposition," soliloquized Kate, as she sat thinking over the counsel of her kind friend. "Nothing is too insignificant for her to ask Divine guidance upon. Of course she means the little every-day concerns of her life. Now I have always felt diffident of naming any of my petty troubles, when I have been on my knees praying to God; but I will henceforward try her plan. I often suffer much pain in my face, which makes me irritable and peevish. I think I will pray about that, and if I have grace given me to bear it with patience, that will perhaps be better for me than to have the pain removed. I have other little sources of worry and perplexity at times, which I would scarcely like to whisper even into a sister's ear; but I will in future unbosom everything to God, and I will begin to do it now."

The result of Kate's happy experiment may be personally understood, far better than I can explain it, by any one who will adopt her plan, and confide all his affairs, his troubles, and his pains, great or small, to God; who is ever willing to hear about them, and who has promised His help to any one who will humbly seek it.

The *Nautilus* sped on her way, under the guidance of her watchful captain. There was about an average number of squalls and calms during the voyage, and one heavy gale off the Cape of Good Hope, which doubtless served those passengers who had never been to sea before, with material for poetical descriptions of "awful billows, mountains high," and other fanciful pictures of their first experience of a gale on ship-board. Kate had previously expressed a longing desire to see a gale of wind; and when they got one, which reduced the

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ship to bare poles, as she scudded before a dangerously heavy sea, Kate thought the waves did not nearly come up to her ideal of a "tremendously high sea." But when the top of a combing wave struck the ship on her port quarter, and stove in the window of her cabin, Kate admitted that the sea was quite high enough for her fancy. And when the mate explained to her the tremendous force of those rolling bodies of water, and that if one wave were to break over the ship in its full force, it would almost certainly wash everything off the deck, and might possibly knock the ship itself to pieces —after that explanation, Kate began to wish for a moderate breeze; and she even said she would prefer a calm to a heavy gale.

No serious accident happened to the ship, and towards the end of the voyage most of the passengers seemed to regret that their sociable party was soon to break up. The only passenger who did not study to make herself generally agreeable, was the Miss Crossby before alluded to; in fact, she seemed to have a chronic habit of grumbling. She had taken every opportunity—through her complaints to the steward—to inform the company that she had been used to better fare than she got at the cabin table; and she had in various other little ways made herself look ridiculous. But as they neared the desired port, she began to show that she could smooth her frowning face if she chose to do so; and one day,—when in an uncommonly confidential mood,—she told Mrs. Wilton that she was going out to the colony to be married to a gentleman who kept a large store somewhere in the interior. Moreover, she said that he was a wealthy man, and kept eleven servants including his clerks. Mrs. Wilton quietly said she wished Miss Crossby much joy in her good prospects; but her

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private opinion was, that if the rich store-keeper were to select for a wife the daughter of some honest farmer in his neighbourhood, he would stand a fairer chance of having a help-mate or a pleasant companion for life, than he would with the lady he had imported, and who had given many disagreeable evidences to all on board that she had a crabbed temper, which would mar the happiness of any man of a domesticated nature.

On the 125th day from London the *Nautilus* entered Port Jackson. The passengers were all on deck, dressed in their holiday clothes. There was gladness on the faces of most of them, for it was a fine day, and the prospect around is not one to produce dulness, as numerous spirited writers have testified, when dilating on the exquisite beauties of Sydney harbour. The little midshipman who had unwittingly shocked Miss Jenny on her first appearance on deck, by remarking, in sailors' jargon, that "she had got her sea legs," looked as if he were sorry to part with the amiable, lively little girl, with whom he had enjoyed many pleasant hours during the voyage. And Jenny herself playfully confessed to Kate, that, so far from wishing to cut the buttons off master Roger's blue jacket, or otherwise to injure him by sharp looks or words, she would give him anything she had in her cabinet for a keepsake; for he was a brave little fellow, and she had admired him desperately ever since the day she saw him on the main yard in a squall, when all the sails were blowing into whiplashes.

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CHAPTER VI.

"I long to hand a full cup of happiness to every human being."
—*Dr. Payson.*

"OH! there is dear papa coming in the white boat! Hurrah! Ha, ha! he can see us! Why don't you wave your handkerchief, Emma? Here we are, papa! Oh dear! what shall I do? I'm so glad!"

"Hush, my dear! Don't be so excited," said Mrs. Wilton to her volatile daughter, Jenny, who was skipping about the deck, and scarcely knew how to express her overflowing joy at seeing her father coming on board, to welcome his beloved family. A few minutes afterwards Mr. Wilton was embracing his dear ones in turn, regardless of the lookers-on, some of whom doubtless sympathized with his gushing feelings, and wished they had loving friends to embrace.

After a while Mrs. Wilton introduced Kate to her husband. He shook hands very cordially with her, and said a few kind words of welcome, which went to her heart and made her feel that though she was in a remote penal colony, she was not wholly shut out from English friendliness and sympathy. Soon they were all helped down the gangway ladder into a boat, and were glad to escape from the noisy excitement on deck. But when rowing towards the shore, Kate felt a little surging of regret at leaving the good old ship which had carried her safely across the sea—the floating home in which

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she had passed more than four months. A carriage was in waiting near to the landing jetty in Sydney cove, at the site of the present circular quay, and the party were driven to Petty's Hotel, where Mr. Wilton had engaged apartments. The first thing that merry-hearted Jenny did when they entered their parlour, was to dance all round the table, to let her papa see, as she said, that she was as lively and nimble as ever, though she had spent two winters in frosty old England.

Mr. Wilton was a middle-aged man of slight stature, with a happy-looking face, which indexed an affectionate nature. His attire was plain, and his complexion was bronzed by exposure to the sun in the bush; but his speech and manners betokened that he was a gentleman. He had emigrated from England to New South Wales fifteen years before, with a moderate capital. Soon after his arrival he received a large grant of land on one of the northern rivers, about a hundred miles from Sydney. Thereupon he erected a comfortable house for himself and his young wife, who had voyaged to the colony with him. Fourteen convict men were assigned to him by the Government, on the usual terms—that is to say, the men were bound to serve him for terms of years (varying according to their judicial sentences of servitude), until they were due for, or entitled to, a ticket-of-leave, consequent on their good behaviour for a given term. All the recompense the men could claim from their master, was a rather limited weekly ration, according to a dietary scale prescribed by law, and also a certain quantity of clothing and bedding each year. Anything else that the men got was purely an indulgence, which they had no right to claim. With that amount of cheap labour, Mr. Wilton soon got much of his land cleared and under profitable cultivation. A

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few years afterwards, in order to provide pasturage for his fast-increasing stock of cattle and horses, he took up a large squattage on the Gwyder river, the superintendence of which he entrusted to a young gentleman who had had some experience of bush life. The station was a good one, and under the careful management of Mr. Thompson it promised to be very profitable.

After a few years of great prosperity, Mr. Wilton fancied he saw his way clear to retire from bush life, with a handsome fortune. From time to time he was on the point of disposing of his possessions, and going to England with his wife and girls; but circumstances as often occurred to frustrate his design of selling off, just as he was on the eve of completing negotiations; so it was at length resolved that Mrs. Wilton should go to England with her daughters, and Mr. Wilton hoped to be able to follow them in a year or two at furthest. In those early days of the colony's history, it was not easy to procure a competent governess who was willing to go into the bush; and Mrs. Wilton had educated her daughters as far as she could. She was taking them to England, partly for the benefit of their health, but principally for their education. Accordingly they sailed from Sydney early in the year 1838.

There was not so much capital in the banks waiting for profitable investment as there is to-day; and valuable as Mr. Wilton's estate was, it was not easy to find a safe purchaser for it. He was one of the careful sort, who could not readily be induced to part with his property for a mere paper consideration. If he sold, he resolved to have ready money, or part cash and satisfactory security for the balance; but while he was leisurely waiting for a buyer on these reasonable terms, a disastrous season of drought came, and his property

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was not salable at any price beyond a positive sacrifice. He threw up the lease of his fine station on the Gwyder river, for his water-holes were dry and the pasturage was burnt up, and more than half of his stock had died from starvation. With the active co-operation of his superintendent, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Wilton resolved to concentrate all his efforts on his homestead; not indeed with a hope of making the farm pay, but in the endeavour to lessen his losses as much as possible, and to avert the utter ruin which had befallen many once prosperous families in his neighbourhood.

It was anything but a cheering state of things for Mrs. Wilton to see on her return to the colony; but she showed no sign of dissatisfaction, and it did not seem to affect the spirits of the girls. Jenny was the same laughing, loving girl as before, and Emma showed the same placidity of disposition that had so won Kate's affection on their earlier acquaintanceship. They were warmly attached to their father, and he was devotedly fond of them. He was perhaps over solicitous for the comfort and happiness of his family; and if a shadow was ever seen on his brow, it was when he felt his inability to afford his darling girls some treat or some expensive luxury for which they had innocently expressed a wish.

The Wiltons stayed a fortnight in Sydney, and Kate had introductions to a few respectable families, and saw all that was then deemed worthy of special notice in the metropolis and its suburbs. She also finished a long letter which she had begun at an early part of the voyage and had continued from time to time; and in due course her beloved parents and her brothers and sisters at home wept and laughed alternately over dear Kate's interesting account of her experience on shipboard, with

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occasional solemn comments on her heart's emotions, from the day the pilot left the ship off Falmouth, till the day when another pilot boarded the ship off Sydney Heads. Her narrative was continued until an hour before she started with the family for their home in the country. There was a postscript to the budget, with many kisses for all her dear ones at home. Mother was deputed to distribute the kisses; and when the happy time came, her father sat by with a smiling face, while the boys and girls clung around mother's neck, and scrambled for their full share of sister Katie's kisses, which had come all the way from "Botany Bay."

The name of Mr. Wilton's country homestead—to which Kate received a cheering welcome—was Yarramundoc. It was pleasantly situated on the margin of a navigable river. The estate comprised 2,500 acres, nearly the whole of which was fenced. About 250 acres were under cultivation, the rest was used as pasturage for dairy cows and a few horses that were required for the establishment; but at the time Kate first saw it, there were scarcely more signs of vegetation than there is on an ocean beach. The few cattle that were to be seen looked half-starved; and probably they would have been wholly starved but for the foliage they were able to browse from the stunted shrubs in the bush. Most of the water-holes were dried up, and the water that remained in a few of them was putrid with the carcases of cattle and horses that had ventured in to slake their thirst, and being too weak to extricate their feet from the boggy earth, had died there.

That was indeed a time of suffering and privation for both man and beast, such as it is to be hoped New South Wales will never see again. Though the residents in the metropolis were perhaps less severely affected by

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the drought than were those in the bush, it was a time of almost unprecedented trial for every one. Provisions were very dear, and speculators were not slow in taking advantage of the scarcity to raise the price of flour to almost famine rates. If the quality of the best bread in Sydney was at that time but inferior—indeed scarcely wholesome, what could the poor prisoners expect? The writer has seen trucks full of bread, in two-pound loaves, wheeled down from the prisoners' barracks for the dinners of the chain gangs working on the streets, which looked more like refuse bricks than anything edible; and how ever the wretched prisoners managed to swallow the "bread," was a wonder to many persons besides the bakers and the contractors.

Kate's sympathies were strongly excited on her first settlement at Yarramundoc, for the miserable condition of the convict men in Mr. Wilton's service. Although he was a kind man, and had the reputation of treating them more like human beings than did many of his neighbours who had convicts assigned to them, he could not give his men better fare than he had himself, and at times that was hard enough. As a rule, good masters make good servants. Without venturing to say much about the goodness or the honest principles of Mr. Wilton's assigned men, it is only fair to them to say, that they never stole anything from their master; and there was so much honour in them that they would not allow any other thieves to rob him. But they were not scrupulous of stealing from any one else; and many savoury messes were cooked and eaten at night in the men's huts, the material for which had been plundered from the hen-roosts and gardens of some of the neighbouring farmsteads.

If Kate felt dispirited at her surroundings, and at

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times was inclined to regret that she had left the pleasant home of her childhood for a life in that sterile land, it is not to be wondered at. Still she did not utter any complaint; and though her prospects were far less promising than she had anticipated, she strove to guard against a spirit of restlessness. Before parting from her beloved father, he had given her many kindly words of counsel, which she often pondered over with advantage. Amongst other sage advice, he bade her carefully beware of being discontented or fretful at trifling events of everyday life, and he added a quotation from a book of wise counsels: "It is only too common for a servant to leave a desirable situation because of some little unpleasantness, which it would not have been very difficult to bear; and how often does she find at her leisure, that it would have been better for her to bear the ills she had than fly to others she knew not of. A person was once told to go through a certain wood, and select a straight rod from its trees; but upon one condition—that he was only to cut one rod, and that he was never to turn backwards for a rod he had once passed. He came upon many that seemed straight; but in the foolish hope of finding one more perfect, he passed through the wood without helping himself to any. So it is with some servants and their situations. Happy the servant who has grace to bear the trials of a lot of average desirableness, and who does not throw away advantages of real value, in the vain search for a perfection that cannot be found."

In a few days there was something like order and routine established in the household, and Kate began her duties in the schoolroom, with her docile pupils Emma and Jane.

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CHAPTER VII.

" His life was gentle, and the elements
So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, ' This was a man ! '"

—*Shakspeare.*

EMMA and Jane Wilton had often entertained Kate, when on the voyage, with little episodes of their former life in the bush; and with spirited descriptions of their favourite ponies, on which they used to ride about in such delightful freedom. They had often pictured in romantic tints the many rural nooks and ravines near their old home, where they used to ramble in search of rare ferns and bush flowers; and their eyes would sparkle with rapture, as they described the fun they used to have rowing their little white skiff up the creek, where the wild convolvuli festooned the overhanging trees, and the pretty green kingfishers used to chirp at them from amongst the waterlilies. Kate would listen with real interest to their exciting stories, though she had sometimes shuddered when they, in their natural way, spoke of their occasional encounters with snakes, during their summer rambles in the bush. They had both promised Kate that she should have a pony, so that they might all ride out together; and they added, " Perhaps some day papa will take us all out for a kangaroo hunt."

Great was the concern of the two sisters, soon after their return home, on hearing that their favourite ponies were dead; that they had got bogged in the big water-

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hole about two months before. Mrs. Wilton tried to console the girls with the reflection, that it was perhaps better for them that they had not the ponies to divert their minds from necessary school duties. "You must not forget, dears, that you have had many holidays during the last two years," said their mother in a soothing tone; "and your studies on ship-board have been unavoidably interrupted almost every day during the voyage. Now I wish you to try your utmost to make up for lost time. If you are very diligent with your lessons, I promise you that I will use my influence with papa to get you each a pony, and have it properly broken in, in time for your Christmas vacation."

"Thank you, dear mamma! And a pony for Miss Maysen too?" said both the girls at once.

"Yes, my dears: Miss Maysen shall have a pony if she wishes to learn to ride. She says she has never yet been on horseback."

"Oh, I am sure Mr. Thompson will teach her to ride, mamma," said Jenny. "He glories in doing anything to please us."

"We shall see, love," responded Mrs. Wilton, who noticed a slight blush on Kate's face at Jenny's innocent proposition. "Now go to the schoolroom, and try your best to lighten Miss Maysen's labours in teaching you."

Mr. Thompson, the superintendent before alluded to, was a genteel-looking young man about twenty-five years of age. He was the son of a missionary in Polynesia. When about ten years of age he was sent to Sydney and placed with a clergyman there, to be educated with his sons. He intended to study for the Church; but his health being rather delicate he was advised by his physician to try a year or two at some out-of-door occupation. Accordingly he decided to go on a cattle

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station; and soon afterwards he was fortunate enough to meet with a squatter from the northern interior, who agreed to take him into his service. He remained with that gentleman for nearly three years, and acquired considerable knowledge of cattle. He then took charge of Mr. Wilton's new station on the Gwyder river. Walter Thompson was of a quiet, retiring disposition, especially when in the presence of ladies with whom he was not intimate; but there was none of the silly shyness which is peculiar to some young men, and which makes them subjects for the merriment or satire of lively girls of their acquaintance; much less was there a particle of the vulgar bombast which some young men affect, under the mistaken idea that it makes them look spirited and manly, and that young ladies admire that sort of thing. Walter had been early taught by his excellent father, that the culture and discipline of the mind produce the most important results on our condition as rational and moral beings, and that the exercise of it involves a solemn responsibility on every man. Some of the leading rules he had been advised to observe were: "Carefully to select subjects to which his attention had been particularly directed, and then to prosecute them steadily and perseveringly upon a regular and connected plan. To cultivate the habit of close attention to the subject before him, whether in reading or observation, or in listening to the instruction of others. Also to cultivate the habit of correct observation, association, and reflection, and study to acquire the habit of improving fragments of time." Those suggestions, together with the following paragraph, which are extracted from an admirable lecture on mental culture and discipline, by Dr. Abercrombie, are worthy the consideration of every man.

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"The foundation of all mental discipline (says a clever writer) consists in the power of mastering the mind. It is in having the intellectual processes under due regulation and control, and being thus able to direct them, upon sound and steady principles, to the acquisition of useful knowledge and the discovery of truth. Here we are, in the first place, reminded of that remarkable power which we possess over the succession of our thoughts. We can direct the thoughts to any subject we please, and can keep them directed to it with steady and continuous attention. In the due cultivation of this power consists a point in mental discipline of primary and essential importance. By the neglect of such culture the mind is allowed to run to waste amid the trifles of the passing hour, or it is left the sport of waking dreams and vain delusions entirely unworthy of its high destiny. There is not a greater source of difference between one man and another than in the manner in which they exercise this power over the succession of the thoughts and in the subjects to which they are habitually directed. It is a mental exercise which lies at the foundation of the whole moral condition. He who in early life seriously enters upon it, under a sense of its supreme importance, who trains himself to habits of close and connected thinking, and exerts a strict control over the subjects to which his thoughts are habitually directed, leading him to such as are really worthy of his regard, and banishing all such as are of a frivolous, impure, or degrading character; this is he who is acquiring the highest of all earthly acquirements, the culture of the understanding and the discipline of the heart."

Mr. Thompson was a stanch friend and a cheerful companion to Mr. Wilton during the absence of his family, and at a season of severe trial. His advice on

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matters relating to the farm was at all times valued, because his opinions were formed after careful consideration, and his judgment was reliable. To his forethought and steadily directed efforts, Mr. Wilton acknowledged himself largely indebted for the preservation of much valuable stock, the loss of which would have been almost irreparable; and his hopeful counsel often helped to lighten Mr. Wilton's heart when it was sadly oppressed with the dread of utter ruin.

"There is no nonsense about Mr. Thompson," was a eulogistic saying of the convict men on the estate; and it was true, though it was expressed in a slangy way. He was far more strict than Mr. Wilton, still he was fair and straightforward in his ways, and the men liked him. Not one of them had the least misgiving that his application in due time for the indulgence of a "ticket-of-leave" would be refused through unjust complaints of their master or superintendent, as was frequently the case with other assigned men in the neighbourhood. Mr. Thompson did not expect the men to do as much work as if they were free men receiving a fair day's wage for their labour; and thus by not overtasking them he perhaps got more work done by them than he would have got by the bullying and grinding systems which were very commonly practised, and which often roused men to desperation. It certainly was not an easy task to manage fourteen convict servants, and Mr. Thompson's moral philosophy was at times sorely tested; still he never would resort to the odious expedient of taking any of his men to the police court to be flogged.

The owner of the estate adjoining Yarramundoc had twenty convict men; and his system of management was directly opposite to the one Mr. Wilton pursued. In fact, he treated his men as if they were wild animals.

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Scarcely a week passed without seeing several of Mr. McGrubb's men marched in fetters to the nearest township, to be there punished for some infringement of his arbitrary rules. The unlucky prisoners underwent a brief trial, which almost invariably resulted in their being taken outside and tied to the triangle at the back of the court house, and flogged by the public scourger.

I have no intention of writing one sentence more than is necessary about those bygone penal horrors, at the recollection of which humanity shudders. It will be seen, further on in my story, that the matters which I must cursorily allude to, have an important connection with the adventures of the young governess, Kate Maysen.

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CHAPTER VIII.

"When to the miserable we extend
Our charity, we unto fortune lend."—*Seneca.*

ABOUT two miles from Yarramundoc, on the opposite bank of the river, stood a rough slab hut, which was tenanted by a notorious couple, named Minabbs. They were what was generally termed "old hands," which signified that they had been sent to the colony as prisoners; and they certainly were well schooled in the trickery which was often practically studied by persons of their class. They were well-known to all the Government men (*i.e.* convicts) in the district; and their house was the nightly haunt of such men as could evade the vigilance of their masters or overseers, and steal away from their huts; and they seldom went to the rendezvous empty-handed. It was pretty well known by all the respectable estate owners around, that the hut was a sort of receiving depôt for stolen property, and a sly grog-shop also. Minabbs had several times been summoned to court for harbouring convict men; but it was almost impossible to get one of the fraternity to give reliable evidence in such cases, and Minabbs, on each occasion, escaped punishment. But he was warned that if he did not look out, his ticket-of-leave would be cancelled; so he enjoyed his liberty on a very uncertain tenure.

A small vessel, which traded between Sydney and the

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township at the head of the river, always called on her downward trip at Minabbs' hut, and took in what cargo she could get, without any prying inquiries as to the original ownership of the miscellaneous lots that were ready for shipment soon after sundown; and the return of the vessel with the proceeds of sales of such lots, was usually a season of general jollification, or spree, as it was more commonly called. A blanket carelessly thrown across a corn-streddle, or some other pre-arranged signal, intimated to all concerned, almost as quickly as telegraphic wires might now do it, that the *Betsy* had arrived with the rum kegs; and when the shades of night set in, there was a general muster of convict-men from all the estates around, and a hard drinking bout began, which was often followed up by a free fight and broken bones. Barney Minabbs got his "reg'lars" (*i.e.* share), and the master of the *Betsy* got his freight and a bonus out of each plundering transaction; and there was seldom any cavilling over their claims, it being well understood by all the plunderers, that it would be as hopeless to discuss a point of right with Minabbs and the skipper, as it would be to coax a bone from a hungry bull-dog. They had the option of paying themselves, and they always exercised that power as far as greediness could stretch it; and they were insensible to all appeals that were not of a physical, or knock-down character.

In the preceding chapter, I glanced at the cruel and despicably selfish policy of the owner of the adjoining estate to Yarramundoc. Mr. McGrubb was a hard master, and he was abhorred and dreaded by his assigned men, who were ill-clad, half-starved looking fellows; and perhaps it is no wonder that they were thieves, for honesty and hunger are not always closely

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allied. It was seldom that any of McGrubb's men got their tickets-of-leave in due time. Rumour hinted that their master generally managed to get that indulgence postponed whenever he chose; and if either of his men was more than ordinarily useful, the chances were very much against the poor fellow ever getting his ticket-of-leave. There were various ways of working that little manœuvre, which few grudging masters understood better than Mr. McGrubb did. Pity that such men as he should ever be masters!

One morning, a few weeks after Kate's arrival at Yarramundoc, there was a great commotion in the neighbourhood. McGrubb's house had been burglariously entered and robbed, and the plunder was traced to Minabbs' hut. Several of McGrubb's men were charged with the theft, and one of Mr. Wilton's men was accused of being an accessory.

A few days afterwards, Mr. Thompson thought it was his duty to attend the court at Lashwell, on behalf of one of the accused men, for whom he was able to prove an *alibi*. Mrs. Wilton wished to do a little shopping in the township, and as the day was very fine, she proposed that Kate and the girls should accompany her; so they all started in their boat, with Mr. Thompson and a boat's crew. On nearing a point where the main road to Lashwell converged to the river, loud cries were heard as from a person in pain, also curses from a gruff voice, which evidently belonged to an assailant. Mr. Thompson at once steered the boat to the shore, and on jumping out, he saw a constable beating his prisoner,—one of McGrubb's men,—whom he was taking to court for trial. The poor man was handcuffed, and quite unable to defend himself from the hard blows of the constable's stick, which were aimed principally

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at his manacled hands and wrists. Mr. Thompson peremptorily ordered the constable to desist from beating the man in that barbarous manner. The pompous little tyrant, who had been accustomed to use his stick in that way for years, was quite indignant at such an unlooked-for check to his operations. He turned round on Mr. Thompson, and sternly demanded to know what right he had to interfere with him when he was taking a prisoner to court; at the same time, as if to show defiance to his opposer, he struck the man another blow over his manacled hands.

Mr. Thompson sprang forward in a resolute way, which made the assailant start back a few paces. On asking the man why he had been beaten, he said that a nail was sticking up in his boot, and because he could not keep quick march the constable had beaten him across the loins, and when he grumbled a bit, he was struck across his wrists and knuckles, and was not allowed to stop to take his boot off.

"Bah! boot off, indeed!" snarled the constable. "Do you think I am not up to your tricks? There are no more nails sticking up in your boot than there are in mine. You only want to give me the slip."

"We shall soon see about that," said Mr. Thompson. "Take your boot off, Green." The man promptly obeyed, when sure enough there was a nail sticking up in the heel long enough to lame a cart-horse. "Poor fellow! no wonder you could not quick march. Jump into my boat, and I will take you to court."

"If you take him you will take me too," exclaimed the constable, as he attempted to spring into the boat after his prisoner.

"No, indeed, I will not take you. You have no nails in your boots, so you can walk, I must not overload my

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boat. Push off, Mike." Away went the boat, leaving the mortified little functionary standing on the grassy margin of the river, threatening all sorts of legal penalties on the head of the man who had dared to rescue a prisoner,—and a convict man,—from the custody of one of her Majesty's officers. The extent of his humiliation will be understood by persons who can remember the immense authority which district constables usually assumed, and their over-bearing disposition towards the unfortunate convict class; and they can also estimate the rash courage of Mr. Thompson in thus, as it were, taking the law into his own hands.

"In my opinion you do perfectly right in giving this poor crippled man a ride; but do you not think that you run a great risk in taking him away from the constable?" Mrs. Wilton softly remarked, when Mr. Thompson again seated himself at the helm.

"I shall give myself some trouble, no doubt; for, you know, I am not in favour with the Bench at Lashwell, since I took up the case of poor Jones, who was unjustly charged with stealing Dowdell's mare. I do not know what risk I might be exposed to, if you and Miss Maysen were not witnesses of this affair, for I should be at the mercy of that savage constable, who, I dare say, will not scruple to say anything that may damage me. The evidence of our boatmen would not weigh a feather in my favour, because they are convicts."

"I would believe anything that Brown stated," continued Mrs. Wilton in the same undertone, "convict though he be, I am sure he is honest and truthful." She alluded to one of the men in the boat.

"Yes, ma'am, you know that, and so do I; but I doubt if the Bench would believe what he swore to, if it contradicted the evidence of the district constable. Well,

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which ever way this affair may end, I have done what I believe to be morally right, if it be legally wrong. I could not stand tamely by and see a fellow-creature, with his hands chained, beaten in a murderous way; and that constable has no more warranty in thus ill-using the prisoner than I had in releasing him. I will for once act as a special constable and take the prisoner to the court-house, and will explain the whole affair to the Bench. Perhaps they will see that I only acted a merciful part, and will accept my explanation; but if they should allow the district constable to lay a charge against me, I may have to trouble you and Miss Maysen to be witnesses in my behalf. Pull away, boys!" he added, in a cheerful tone to his crew. "Let us see if we can get to the township before Mr. Wagstaff has time to get a summons for me."

If the men had been pulling for the dear prize of freedom, they could not have put more strength into their stroke; nevertheless, the incensed constable outsped them, and had told the Bench all about the assault and rescue before Mr. Thompson arrived with the prisoner in his charge.

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CHAPTER IX.

"For they can conquer who believe they can."—*Virgil.*

A REPORT of all the judicial proceedings, and the troublesome consequences to Mr. Thompson, which resulted from that manly interposition to save a helpless prisoner from being crippled for life, would more than half fill my book, and would not be worth reading after all. Some of the magistrates of the district were friends of Mr. McGrubb, and foes of Mr. Thompson and his employer; and that may perhaps explain at a glance why there were several adjournments of a case which ought to have been settled in ten minutes. The old records of the Attorney-General's office in Sydney,—if they are still preserved,—might witness to the ability and perseverance of Mr. Thompson, in battling with a confederacy whose powerful influence few men were bold enough to oppose, and against whose judicial decisions it had heretofore been deemed almost hopeless to appeal.

Tom Green, the man in whose defence Mr. Thompson took such a praiseworthy stand, was a wheelwright, and a very handy man at his trade. What crime he committed, for which he was transported, I will not pretend to say, for confessions made by prisoners on such matters were not always reliable. It might have been for something not more wicked than knocking down a hare; but whatever his crime was, he was sentenced to seven years penal servitude, and soon after his arrival in

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Sydney he was assigned to Mr. McGrubb. Tom had served more than five years, and during that term he had twice applied for the indulgence of a ticket-of-leave, which, according to the existing code of convict regulations, he was entitled to; but on each occasion his application had been refused by the Bench, in consequence of some complaints which his master made against him, and to which he might just as well have pleaded guilty as not guilty. He was about to make a third application for his ticket, when the robbery took place at McGrubb's house. Tom was accused of being one of the burglars, and was being escorted to Lashwell to answer the charge before the "Bench of Petty Sessions," when he was rescued from the violence of the constable, as I have described in the preceding chapter.

Mr. Thompson had long observed the quiet demeanour of Tom Green, and his steady industry, and he thought that Tom was a more reputable man than his rich master. Though the poor fellow was surrounded by demoralizing influences which it is scarcely prudent to allude to, he seemed to preserve a self-respect which ought to have secured for him the confidence and the kindly consideration of his master; instead of which it only incited in him a despicably selfish wish to keep, by fair means or otherwise, a very useful servant. A pretty correct acquaintance with Mr. McGrubb's character, and his usual cruel treatment of his convict men, assisted Mr. Thompson in his judgment of Tom Green's case; and he resolved, at whatever cost or trouble to himself, he would see that justice was done to the poor man, who was as helpless as a galley slave. Accordingly he went to work in a careful way to investigate the details connected with the charge against Green; and having satisfied himself,—from clear circumstantial proofs, irrespective of the

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man's own solemn statement,—that he was innocent of any complicity in the robbery, Mr. Thompson stood up as his avowed advocate.

The charges against Mr. Thompson for rescuing a prisoner, and assaulting a constable, were vexatious, and it was necessary for Mrs. Wilton and Kate to attend twice at the Lashwell court-house as witnesses; but those were small matters compared with the trouble Mr. Thompson had in his defence of Green, on the charge of burglary. Some sagacious reader may naturally enough ask, why Mr. Thompson did not employ a legal advocate. But it was not so easy to find a duly qualified lawyer in small country townships as it is now-a-days, and it would have been very expensive to engage one to come up from Sydney time after time, as the case was adjourned; besides, Mr. Thompson had confidence in his own common sense to prove the righteousness of his cause. It was indeed a tiresome affair, but eventually it ended the right way. He not only procured Tom Green's acquittal of the charge on robbery, but procured for him the long-deferred indulgence of his ticket-of-leave. But the victory was won at the expense of making an avowed enemy of his neighbour, McGrubb, and of incurring the covert ill-will of the Bench of Justices, for they naturally regarded all appellants to the Attorney-General as litigious disturbers of their established authority over the lives and liberties of the convict population in the wide police district of Lashwell.

Mr. Wagstaff was reprimanded by the Attorney-General for ill-using a prisoner; and his chagrin at his humiliation was expressed in very bitter language. When solacing himself one evening with an extra glass at the bar of the Bandicoot Inn, he vowed, by all that

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was wicked, he would settle Tom Green's ticket in less than a month. He doubtless would have kept his vow; and, right or wrong, Tom would have had some damaging charge laid against him before long; but in anticipation of such revengeful action, Mr. Thompson got him a ticket-of-leave for New England, and also gave him a letter of recommendation to an influential squatter of his acquaintance in that district. A few months afterwards he had the satisfaction of receiving a letter from Tom Green, expressing his gratitude for the great kindness shown to him, and stating that he had set up a wheelwright's shop on his own account, at Inverell.

I have no desire to recall bygone days of hardship, injustice, and crime; better far to let the history of those sad times be buried in oblivion. I would not have alluded to Tom Green's case, only that it is necessary to the sequel of my story. But now that I am touching on the subject of penal servitude, I will in a few words express my firm belief, that in many miserable instances the crimes of convict men were chargeable to the tyrannical treatment of their masters. My feelings have often been shocked at the wanton cruelty and injustice which some poor fellows endured at the hands of masters of the McGrubb type; and it is no wonder to me that some men took to the bush in sheer desperation, and committed crimes for which they were soon afterwards hanged. There are doubtless at this day lying in dark secluded ravines of the bush, or at the bottoms of some deep water-holes, the bones of human beings whose lives were made intolerable burdens by slave-like servitude and brutal tyranny, and they were glad to escape, "anywhere, anywhere, out of the world!" Poor, soul-crushed mortals! who were driven to madness and then to suicide by the cruelty of masters or overseers, who

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possessed far less of the common feelings of humanity than the miserable men whom they barbarously hunted to despair. Friends and relatives afar off are perhaps ignorant of the untimely ends of the missing ones, and it is well that they should remain in ignorance; but it is sad to reflect, that their wretched fate might have been averted, and they have been reclaimed to society, if they had been treated as men, and not as wild animals.

For the foregoing expression of my opinion, I trust I shall not be suspected of being an apologist for the bushrangers of more modern days, or indeed of any other rogues, either in the bush or in the city. There were, no doubt, many desperate ruffians amongst the convict men, who perhaps would have defied the reforming efforts of the best of masters; and if it had been difficult to find a solitary instance of an opposite character it would not be a wonder, considering the evil influences by which those men were usually surrounded. But there were men,—and I have had several in my employ,—who, convicts though they were, possessed honest, kindly principles which gentlemen might be proud of. I have entrusted some of these men with the charge of thousands of pounds worth of property. Tom Green was one of the best samples of an honest, sober, industrious convict that I ever met with. I shall have a few more words to say about him anon, which will help to establish the fact.

Mr. Wagstaff never forgot the unprecedented snubbing he got at the hands of Mr. Thompson; and if he were not thoroughly cured of his propensity for exercising his cudgel over the limbs of his unlucky prisoners, he was taught the salutary fact, that he could not do it with impunity. Some folks in the neighbourhood said that

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the wholesome reproof made him a better man. Let us hope it did.

The once-dreaded little functionary of Lashwell has laid down his official staff for ever, and all the honoured magnates of that Judicial Bench have also "shuffled off the mortal coil." Mr. McGrubb will never more be seen on the estate which he made rich by the grinding labour of his half-starved convict men; and not an acre of his land is owned this day by his kith or kin. Minabbs' and his noisy wife, and the plunder-selling master of the cutter *Betsy* are all gone—*nobody knows where.* Not long ago I sailed up that river, past the site of Minabbs' old hut; but there was not a single post or slab to be seen. Thistles and prickly pears were growing over the charred ruins. I reflected, with a shrug of horror, that on that spot, a generation ago, were often heard the harsh sounds of lawless revelry and of drunken brawling which sometimes ended in—murder; and that there were plotted deeds of darkness, which, though they perhaps escaped the penalties of human laws, the great day will bring to light, and the reaping will be "a harvest of desperate sorrow."

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CHAPTER X.

"It is difficult to know at what moment love begins; it is less difficult to know it has begun."—*Longfellow.*

THE reflections of Kate Maysen on her first arrival at Yarramundoc were anything but cheering. As I before stated, it was at a season of protracted drought. All around the homestead was a saddening prospect of sterility, and the atmosphere was constantly darkened with smoke from running fires in the adjacent bush. She fancied that her life would be a very dreary one; and if she often sighed for her old home, who can wonder? But in a short time she began to realize that bush life was not the dull monotony which her forebodings had pictured; on the contrary, it was to her a life of healthful freedom, such as she had never before enjoyed.

"A home is what its inmates choose to make it," is a trite saying; but the little circle at Yarramundoc seemed to believe in it, and there was a unanimous disposition to add to the comfort and happiness of home life. I have before intimated that Mr. and Mrs. Wilton were persons of cultivated tastes, and Mr. Thompson was equally refined. He had spent several years in the bush; but it was evident in him that a secluded life does not necessarily make a man forget inbred gentlemanly habits and polite deportment. The usual gatherings around the social board each day, were not seasons of mere chat about the hourly little occurrences on the

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farm, much less was the time wasted in common gossip anent the doings of their neighbours. There was seldom a lack of subjects for sprightly conversation, and the long evenings were agreeably relieved of tedium by music and singing, or by readings from the new books and reviews which they received up periodically from the library in Sydney. Mr. Wilton was fond of the study of natural history, and he occasionally gave a sort of family lecture on birds, insects, or reptiles; and made it more interesting by the exhibition of specimens, which he from time to time added to his rare collection. Any amusing incident which occurred during his bush rambles in pursuit of his favourite study, he would skilfully weave into his scientific discourses, so that his homely lectures were always a source of interest and pleasure to his young hearers, and tended to incite in them a disposition, when taking their walks or rides about the bush, to observe the wonders of nature, which are everywhere lavishly exhibited to inquiring eyes.

Mr. Thompson was a skilful chess-player; and one winter evening he kindly offered to teach Kate the game. She had observed, with some degree of impatience, that he and Mr. Wilton sometimes sat for hours over a game without scarcely exchanging a word; and she fancied that chess was a most tedious amusement, and was certainly a puzzling one to ignorant onlookers.

"Many ladies have a prejudice against this scientific game, Miss Maysen," said Mr. Thompson, when Kate had rather bluntly expressed her opinion of it. "I confess that they have some show of reason for their want of taste, for it must look like very dull child's play to the uninitiated, when watching two players tardily shifting about a lot of red and white ivory figures; but if you will honour me by playing only six games with me,

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I confidently predict that you will make an addition to the multitude of devotees to this highly interesting and innocent pastime."

Kate was at length persuaded to take a first lesson, merely to see the movements of the pieces, and that incited her to take a second lesson, and so on. At her sixth game she actually beat Mr. Thompson, whereupon Mr. Wilton passed a high eulogium on her skilful play. Kate more than half suspected that her preceptor had made several awkward moves, on purpose to give her a chance to take his queen and several other important pieces; but she could not draw any confession from him, save of the palpable fact that he was check-mated. Emma and Jenny, who were watching the contest, were so delighted at Kate's victory, that they resolved to learn to play, and forthwith they began their elementary course, under the patient tuition of Mr. Thompson. They soon got an inkling of the game, and thenceforward chess was one of the favourite sources of amusement during the winter evenings.

The long drought at length broke up, and a succession of heavy rainfalls overflowed the river and creeks, and flooded much of the cultivation. But happily summer droughts and winter floods are not perpetual. With the welcome spring season the whole features of the country were changed, and nature put on her beautiful adornments. Richly plumaged birds, which had months before flitted away from the blackened, smoking forests, to green country afar off, now returned from their migratory flight, to find their native woods resplendent with bright blossoms, the fields luxuriantly waving with tasselling corn or maize, and the orchard and vineyard at Yarramundoc showing glad promise of many a luscious meal; for the birds all seemed, by their boldness of approach, to

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understand that a friend of the feathery tribe owned the fruit, and that they might feast without risk of being shot. The forest trees, too, seemed to spring again into life, and put forth myriads of green sprays from their fire-charred branches. The clustering mimosas on the margin of the river added their strong perfume to the aroma of the eucalyptus and honeysuckle, and the air was redolent with health-giving fragrance. All vegetable nature was alive again, and was smiling at the merry humming of the insect tribes, a chorus of gladness that winter was past, and sunny spring-time had come back to warm the southern world.

From the front of the house at Yarramundoc the eye caught first the river in the foreground, wending its tortuous way for many miles through a vast plain, fertile in the extreme, and only awaiting the sturdy arm and directing brain of the thorough farmer, to make it as remunerative as a gold field. In the distance was a range of darkly wooded mountains, which screened off two degrees of afternoon sunshine, and made a sort of twilight which often reminded Kate of dear old England's clime, and of her summer rambles, after school hours, among the sylvan glades, within sound of the evening bells of the ancient abbey of St. Albans. Not far from the house was a pretty creek (Kate always called it a brook); and sometimes on half holidays she and her young pupils would take the skiff, which they could manage very expertly, and row up it for a mile or two; and usually they returned with the boat half-laden with water-lilies, or with various coloured convolvuli, which hung in luxurious tresses or festoons from the swamp-oak trees that grew on the banks of the streamlet.

Mr. Wilton was a most indulgent parent. He spared

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no trouble or reasonable expense in getting anything that could conduce to the comfort or amusement of his beloved daughters; and Kate was usually a sharer in their pleasures, for they were thoroughly unselfish girls. After the pasture became abundant, and the horse stock on the estate began to recover from their semi-starvation, Mr. Wilton had three young colts broken in to the side-saddle for Emma and Jenny and Kate; and Mr. Thompson took great pains in teaching Kate to ride. She soon acquired confidence on horseback, and then she often took rides in the bush with her pupils; and sometimes Mr. Thompson would accompany them, in order, as he said, to show them the most direct routes through the bush, and the safest paths up the mountains.

In those days there were no bush missionaries, though there was great need for them; but sometimes a minister of religion would call at the house, which was about half a mile from a high road; and they often had calls from other respectable travellers, who were always welcomed and very hospitably entertained. On fine Sunday mornings all the family usually rode or drove to church at Lashwell, nine miles distant; but when the weather was unfavourable to go so far, either Mr. Thompson or Mr. Wilton conducted divine service in the granary, at which most of the servants attended, also as many of the neighbours as could be persuaded to come. There were not many families living near to Yarramundoc with whom Mr. or Mrs. Wilton were on terms of close intimacy; but they had resources in their own home, and there were seldom any regrets expressed at a lack of society or for rational amusement. Kate's pupils were not progressing so satisfactorily under her tuition as she could wish, but otherwise her life was one of real enjoy-

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ment; nothing seemed to be wanting to complete her happiness, but the assurance that her beloved family at home were well and in comfortable circumstances; and she sometimes wished they were not so widely separated from her.

It may be surmised, by some of my ardent young readers, that an attachment would naturally spring up between Mr. Thompson and Kate; for rural rides and walks, even though in company with Emma and Jenny, would be tenderly encouraging, and that *tête-à-tête* games at chess would be highly stimulating to the growth of mutual love. Such is often the case; but if it were so with Walter Thompson and Kate, no token was given by either of them that was manifest to the acute perceptions of Mr. or Mrs. Wilton. Doubtless Kate had her own opinion of Mr. Thompson's merits: she must have known that he was a handsome-looking fellow, and if she thought tenderly of him, she with becoming modesty kept it a profound secret. Walter was equally modest on that point, for his character was quite opposite to that of the lady-killing exquisites who are often seen in modern society; and he never, either by word or act, violated the rules of propriety, in his association with any female members of the household.

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CHAPTER XI.

"Defer not till to-morrow to be wise;
To-morrow's sun to thee may never rise."—*Congreve.*

"OH, Jenny! you are a very idle girl, and I am weary of entreating you to keep to your practice. It is most disheartening to me."

Thus remonstrated Kate in a sorrowful tone, as she went into the breakfast-room one morning, and found Miss Jenny enjoying a game of romps with a curly-headed boy of three years old, an especial favourite of hers. Half an hour before, Kate left Jenny at the piano, and had extorted from her a promise that she would practise a full hour, and count all the while. Ten minutes afterwards little Bob (the infant son of a stock-man who occupied a hut a short distance from the mansion), came toddling in by the back way, as he often did without an invitation; and the fun-loving expression on his pretty sun-burnt face had allured Jenny from her duties, and made her forget her promise to be diligent. She was skipping and frolicking about the room with her noisy young playmate, when Kate opened the door of the schoolroom adjoining, and awoke her to a sense of her shortcomings.

"Jenny, I really am grieved with you; and I must report to your mamma your constant neglect of your lessons, of your music lessons especially."

"Oh, pray don't say that again, Miss Maysen, or you

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will make me very unhappy," replied Jenny pathetically; at the same time there was a bewitchingly comical twinkle in her eyes, which might have disarmed the anger of a sterner monitress than Kate. "If you have any heart in you, my dear governess, don't tell mamma, and I will never do so any more, no never." Then turning to little Bob, she exclaimed with mock anger, "Get along home, you little teaze! See what affliction you have brought upon me by trotting in here at school-time. Be off directly, or I'll make the cat bite you! Here, Puss! catch him! Away with you, you rogue! and if you dare to come in here again till I call you, I'll nip your nose with the tongs. Now, Miss Maysen, don't say anything more to grieve me, pray don't! My heart won't bear it. Yes, Miss, I know that practice is useful, and I am going to it with all my might, I am indeed. Oh, dear, dear!" added Jenny in a loud whisper, as she reseated herself on the piano stool, "I wonder what dreadful monster it was that invented music? If this dear old house of ours were to catch fire,—of course I hope it won't,—but if it should do on one of these hot windy days, when the bush is blazing all around, I would say to the firemen, 'My good men, save everything you can in reason, pots, kettles, anything in the house worth threepence, but do not touch the piano, if you have any pity for Jenny Wilton.'"

"Now, Miss Jenny, listen to me," said Kate, after she had closed the door. "Please to leave off your talking and your playful antics. I am very serious now, and I wish you to be so for a few minutes."

"Yes, Miss Maysen, I am very serious," responded Jenny, whose face suddenly began to show real concern, for she could see that her young governess was in sad earnest.

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"Please to hear what I have to say, Jenny. It is now about twelve months since I began my duties as governess in this house, and I am sorry to say your progress has been unsatisfactory to me. I have told you this several times before, as you are aware. I have heard it remarked, that you have good capacity for learning, and I believe you have, so I must conclude that the cause of your not making fair progress, is my want of skill to teach you, or my inability to preserve necessary discipline in school hours."

"Oh, I confess I have been a disobedient, idle girl, Miss Maysen. I am sorry indeed that I have grieved you, and I will in future try my utmost to learn anything you wish to teach me."

"You have several times said as much before, Jenny; and you forget your promises almost directly after you have made them. I fear that I shall have to resign my charge over you."

"If you do, Miss Maysen, I am sure I shall grow more idle than ever, and be a dreadful dunce. Do, pray, forgive my naughtiness this once, and I promise and vow that I will begin to be extra diligent. Not an atom of play will I allow myself till school is over; and if that little monkey, Bob, ever runs in to interrupt me again, I'll hunt him down to his hut with a broom. Oh! do try me again—only once more, Miss Maysen, and I'll be as good as you can reasonably expect me to be."

"Now please to sit down again, Miss Jenny. I will not allow you to throw your arms about my neck. If your affection for me were as warm as you wish me to think it is, you would not be so disobedient to me. I feel that it is my duty to speak to your mamma on this matter, and I shall do it at once. No, I will not stay till to-morrow."

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Kate then left the room. She was no sooner gone than the schoolroom door was opened, and Emma peeped in, her eyes sparkling with rompish fun. Seeing that Kate was absent, she began to skip about the breakfast-room like a fairy elf in a pantomime, much to the concern of her sister, who had just begun to practise her scales in earnest.

"Oh, Jenny! I am bubbling over with high spirits this morning. It is wasting this beautiful weather to sit in a schoolroom. I wish Miss Maysen would give us a holiday. Ha, ha! I could catch a kangaroo in the bush!"

"You can jump like a kangaroo; but I wish you would be quiet, Emma, and let me go on with my practising."

"I can't be quiet on this lovely, lively morning. I feel ready to fly to the mountain yonder, and have a whole day's fun. I wish I were a bird."

"You'll soon feel glad to fly back to the schoolroom, for Miss Maysen has just gone to tell mamma that she must give up teaching us because we are so lazy. Ah, laugh away, Emmy; you'll soon be weeping."

"But, Jenny dear! Are you really as earnest as you look? Is it a fact that Miss Maysen is gone to complain of us, or is it one of your comical fables? Do stop your practice for half a minute, and tell me truly."

"Indeed it is a fact, and we shall soon feel the force of it. Here comes mamma down stairs, so you had better go to your work. Heigho! I wish I were at Banjoe-wanjie for an hour or two!"

Away skipped Emma, and in another minute Mrs. Wilton and Miss Maysen entered the room, looking unusually serious. "I wish to speak to you, Jenny," said her mamma, beckoning her to follow into the

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schoolroom, where sat Emma at her desk, writing her French exercises as rapidly as a special reporter or a telegraph clerk.

"I am very much grieved, my dears!" began Mrs. Wilton, after she had bade her daughters sit beside her. "I can scarcely express my concern at the statement which Miss Maysen has made to me, namely, that she is unable to induce you, either by persuasion or other means, to pay that attention to your lessons which would ensure even moderate progress. I take some blame to myself for not observing your idleness, and thus sparing your very kind young governess the pain of complaining to me of you; but you know that my frequent sickness during the last twelve months has obliged me to neglect many social duties. I must tell your papa that Miss Maysen is going to leave us at the end of this quarter. Of course he will know the reason why she is going, and I leave you to fancy what his feelings will be."

"Oh, mamma! dear mamma! we will be more industrious in future. Pray don't tell papa!" exclaimed both girls at once, and they burst into tears. "Do persuade Miss Maysen to try us once more, mamma—only for one quarter, and we will never grieve her again."

"I am sure you would be sorry to distress your dear papa," continued Mrs. Wilton mildly. "Indeed it would be a sadness for us all; but that is not the worst that I dread from your culpable negligence. It is the prospect of your growing up to womanhood with your minds uncultured that I am most concerned at. Of what practical use, think you, will be the mere smattering of knowledge that you can acquire by such careless means as you have lately been using? I remember that you once remarked to me, Emma, on board ship, how silly

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Miss South looked when the captain asked her the meaning of a short sentence in French in a book he was reading. 'I *think* it means that the peasants are fond of dancing,' she said, in a very doubtful tone; and the captain looked dissatisfied with her answer. And you know, when she was pressed to play an accompaniment to a simple little Scotch song, at Mrs. Bond's party in Sydney, she was obliged to confess that she could not read music off at sight. My own private opinion of Miss South was, that she scarcely knew anything thoroughly."

"She told me, ma, that her early education had been neglected," said Emma in a meek, apologetic tone.

"Ah, that is a common saying of grown-up girls and boys, my dear, and often of men and women also; but I fear it usually means that they themselves had been negligent in their schooldays. Miss South says she was two years at a 'finishing school;' and I dare say, if the truth were told, she trifled away a good part of her school time in silly play, as you have been doing; and now, whenever she goes into refined company, she will be glad to shrink into a corner, lest her shortcomings should make her a subject for ridicule. Few girls study much after their schooldays are over. Usually they have other duties to occupy their time; but they find leisure to reflect, with sorrow and shame, that they wasted some of the best years of their life in frivolity; and that what they used to playfully call cheating their governess by neglect of their lessons, was in reality cheating themselves of that necessary learning or knowledge which would have tended to make them happy and useful in after life. Now tell me, Jenny, would you, after you are supposed to have finished your education, like to show such hesitation or ignorance in translating

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a simple sentence in French, as Miss South showed at the captain's question; or would you like to confess, in effect, that your musical studies have been almost waste of time, as she did at Mrs. Bond's party?"

"Oh, no, mamma; indeed I should not!" replied Jenny.

"I should feel dreadfully humiliated if I were to show myself such a dunce," said Emma. "I have always wished to be clever, because I know that it would please you and dear papa; but I thought I had plenty of time before me to learn."

"That is another error into which many girls and boys are apt to fall; and it is only when they grow up, and often when it is too late to remedy it, that they perceive the mistake they have made."

"If you will persuade Miss Maysen to try us for another quarter, dear mamma, you shall see that we are really determined to attend to our studies with all our might," said Emma; while Jenny's earnest looks showed that she was equally willing to begin to improve.

"I will consider about it, my dears," replied their mother. "Now go on with your lessons. Miss Maysen, will you please to come with me into the parlour for a little while?"

"Now, Jenny, I am resolved from this very morning, that I will not waste another hour of my school-time," said Emma emphatically. "And if you ever do or say any of your comical things to make me laugh, I'll——"

"There, there, you need not lecture me any more," interrupted Jenny, "I have had precept enough for the present, and my heart is sore over it. I am as much in earnest as you are to reform, from this unlucky morning; but perhaps it is a lucky morning for us after all—it

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certainly will be so, if it saves us from growing up into dunces, like Nancy South."

The foregoing dialogue sufficiently explains poor Kate's greatest trouble in life. She had entered upon her duties as governess with much misgiving as to her competence to manage two girls who were only a few years younger than herself; and but for the reassuring fact that they were both warmly attached to her, she would not have had courage to undertake such a responsibility. Emma and Jane were goodnatured girls, but they were not diligent in their school duties; many other kind girls, and boys too, have a similar failing. It is always admitted that a too close application to study is exhaustive of the mental as well as the physical powers; but it is equally true that too much recreation or diversion is enervating. For a month or two Kate did not worry much about the slow progress of her pupils, for she herself felt a difficulty in shaking off the listlessness or indisposition for a steady routine, which her exciting life on ship-board had naturally produced; but as time wore on without showing a reasonable improvement in her pupils, it became a real trouble to her. She several times appealed to them as tenderly and forcefully as she could, and on each occasion they had promised amendment; but they soon forgot their promises, and at length Kate made up her mind to resign her unsatisfactory post, and endeavour to get a situation as an improver in some good school at Sydney, for she sadly felt her deficiencies as a teacher.

Kate and Mrs. Wilton were more than two hours in earnest conference. I need not report all that passed between them; but the result was that Kate was induced to reconsider her determination to resign her charge; and her kind mistress undertook to help her personally

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in the management of her volatile pupils. When that decision was made known to the girls, they were much relieved; and with penitential tears they promised that they would use their best endeavours to make a fair progress in their studies.

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CHAPTER XII.

"To be man's tender mate was woman born;
And in obeying nature, she best serves
The purposes of Heaven."—*Schiller.*

KATE had great cause to rejoice at the proper stand she took with her young pupils, for they certainly did begin to use their best endeavours to improve, and they never showed the least displeasure with her for complaining of them to their mother. Mr. and Mrs. Wilton were much gratified at Kate's high-principled conduct; and they each, in a quiet way, tried to help her all they could. Her school-work now began to be a real pleasure to her, for the girls never gave her any trouble; and at the end of the second year they had made such good progress,—in music especially,—that their father made them a present of a new piano and a harmonium, and made Kate also a present of a handsome side-saddle, as a mark of his appreciation of her valuable services. It was also mutually arranged that Kate should continue her duties for a third year; and after that, Mrs. Wilton hoped to get a finishing governess for her daughters, and also for Kate, if she chose to stay a while longer with them.

In that unruffled routine months glided away very smoothly, leaving sunny memories, but nothing to darken the pleasing retrospect. Kate became quite a daring horsewoman; and her letters descriptive of

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her long rides through the wild bush, made her little brothers and sisters open their eyes wide with wonder and admiration. On two occasions she rode to a kangaroo hunt with Emma, and Jane, and Mr. Wilton, and Mr. Thompson. And once, when she and the girls were out for a ride without an escort, they sighted a pair of full-grown emus on a wide swampy flat, and they had an exciting gallop after them; but fleet as their ponies were, the emus out-sped them. They would sometimes accompany Mr. Thompson on a sporting adventure, and they usually returned with a bagful of beautiful parrots or other richly plumaged birds, with which the bush abounded. Mr. Thompson was clever at skinning and stuffing birds; and Kate had quite a collection of stuffed birds and animals in her little museum, which she was waiting for an opportunity to forward to her friends in England. Sometimes Mr. Wilton would take the girls and Kate with him on a snake-hunting expedition; and on one occasion he shot six black snakes, averaging quite six feet in length, in a boggy hollow not far from the orchard. There were many snakes about Yarramundoc in summer-time, and especially after a flood which had covered the low grounds; for the snakes would then make for the ridges. Kate was always nervously cautious when walking about the bush; but Emma and Jenny never seemed to have any fear of snakes or other deadly reptiles. During the first flood which happened after Kate's arrival, a hut which some of the convict men occupied was submerged almost to the roof, and the men of course had to remove out of it. Soon after the flood waters had subsided, one of the men went to the hut to clean it out, when he found more than a dozen snakes coiled about the rafters and the wall-plates. It was not an uncommon occurrence for a snake to be seen

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in the verandah, on the sunny side of the house at Yarramundoc; but it was very rarely that one was found inside the house.

During a heavy flood, which occurred while Kate was there, a gentleman who owned a small farm on the opposite bank of the river had to remove out of his house, in which the water was rising, and to take his wife and family in a boat to a small hillock about a mile away. He made a rude sort of tent with carpets that he had carried from his house, and spread bedding on the ground, into which his wife and children huddled together. But they soon found, to their horror, that the hillock on which they had taken refuge abounded with snakes, which had swam there for their lives. The gentleman and his man-servant succeeded in making a fire, which, however, only served to attract the snakes; and all night long he and his man were kept actively at work killing the noxious reptiles, as they wriggled to the encampment. Several snakes were destroyed while trying to coil themselves under the blankets inside the tent.

It will be observed, that I have not stopped to give many particulars of Kate's experience, as she smoothly glided out of her teens into her twentieth year. There were doubtless many occurrences in her bush life which it would be interesting to notice; but as I wish to make my book of a moderate length, I must hasten on to that part of her life's history which was of a somewhat opposite character to what it was during the peaceful years she spent under the hospitable roof at Yarramundoc. I have before stated that Mr. Thompson had never breathed a word of love-making into Kate's ears, which is quite correct. But I must now relate a little incident which occurred towards the end of Kate's third

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year at Yarramundoc, which pretty clearly showed the state of his heart. He adopted, perhaps, an entirely new method of disclosing his love to a young lady, and he may be considered quite out of order; but I will state the fact just as it happened, and the gentle reader can form her own opinion of his judgment or discretion. There are various ways of making love.

One fine Sunday morning, Kate and her pupils were going to ride to church on their ponies. Mr. and Mrs. Wilton had gone on before in a gig. The girls had mounted their horses, and Mr. Thompson was securing a faulty buckle in the surcingle of Kate's saddle.

"Thank you, thank you very much; that will do now, Mr. Thompson," said Kate, who was rather impatient to start. "You are taking a deal of trouble."

"I consider it to be my sacred duty to guard you from accidents," he replied, with a slight quaver in his manly voice.

"Oh dear me! Why is it your duty, Mr. Thompson?" Kate's innocent tongue tripped out the words before her good judgment could stop them.

"Because I feel assured in my heart that I shall own you for life," he replied, while he placed a chair for Kate to mount. She sprang into the saddle and rode off at a canter; but her heart seemed in a gallop, and the blushes on her fair face showed how much those few words had excited her.

Kate forgot the divisions in the Rev. Mr. Smith's sermon that morning; and though she earnestly tried to banish all distracting thoughts from her mind, back would come, ringing in her ears like bell-music, those words—the first breathings of love that she had ever listened to. Throughout that day, and for several hours during the ensuing night, they were uppermost in

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her thoughts, and when half-dozing she heard herself softly repeating them. At times she tried to feel indignant with Mr. Thompson for his presumption; but she instantly remembered that he did not say it in a rude tone—quite the contrary. Then she would again blame herself for asking the hasty question which had drawn such a significant confession from him. Finally she began to cry, and that soothed her perturbation as effectively as a heavy tropical shower of rain beats down a breaking sea.

Kate had felt the value of her kind mistress's counsel on several occasions; she had faithfully kept her promise to Mrs. Maysen to act a mother's part, so Kate, after a few days' consideration, resolved to tell Mrs. Wilton what Mr. Thompson said to her. She took an opportunity one evening, while her pupils were at their lessons, to open her heart on the delicate subject.

Mrs. Wilton smiled when Kate had told her little story, and said, "Well, my dear, I feel assured that Walter Thompson has not an unmanly design of trifling with you. That important point is settled in my mind, and you may feel quite easy about it. It would have been better if you had ridden off without replying to his gallant speech, about it being his duty to guard you sacredly; but the wisest of us do not always see what is the best course of action, until it is too late to adopt it. What a good thing it would be if we were more foreseeing!"

"I am grieved that I should have been so unguarded as to make such a silly reply," sighed poor Kate.

"Pray don't make yourself so uneasy about that slight error of judgment. I am sure Walter will not misinterpret it, he is too sincere and single-hearted to do that. I am really glad at his disclosure, which I take

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to be a modest sort of preliminary to a more outspoken declaration of love; and your parents would be glad at it if they knew Walter as well as I do. I confess that it was a singular way for a gentleman to express his heart's feelings to a young lady of his choice; but Walter is rather strange in his ways, as you know we have often playfully remarked, and I dare say he is as ignorant of the fashionable modes of love-making as he is of shams in general. He would never seriously think of making love to you on a Sunday morning just as you were starting off to church, so his remarks were quite as spontaneous as your reply to them. Don't worry any more about it; but, tell me, my dear, do you love Walter? Do not be afraid to open your mind to me. I am your mother now, and in such an important matter it is your duty to be confiding."

Kate blushed deeply, and her honest eyes filled with tears. "Ah, yes, dear, I see; you need not tell me," added Mrs. Wilton, as she drew Kate towards her and kissed her affectionately. "Walter will be a husband worthy of you, if it is decreed that you shall be united. I know you will seek for guidance from that Divine source of help to which we have so often appealed together, and you will surely be guided aright. I advise you to preserve the same demeanour towards Mr. Thompson as heretofore, and if he should make any further confessions to you, you can let me know." Kate thanked her good friend for her motherly counsel; and after a little more conversation on the same subject, she rejoined her pupils, who had just finished their evening lessons, and were ready for a little fun. Of course they had not the least inkling of the nature of the conference which their mamma and their governess had been having for an hour or more.

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Mrs. Wilton told her husband of Kate's tender communication; that was only proper, and was not a breach of confidence, for Mr. Wilton was equally interested in Kate's welfare. He laughingly remarked, "Walter is an odd fellow, a mere child in some of life's matters, though he is as manly in his habits and principles as any one that I ever met with. I am as certain as you are, that he had no idea of being rude in his peculiar mode of making love. Tell Kate I will warrant that much; and I think any one might forgive his eccentricities, because he is so thoroughly true and honest in all his intentions. But only think, dear, if I had paid my first addresses to you in that presumptuous style! ha! ha! I fancy you would have extinguished me for my impertinence, and perhaps you would be the honoured wife of a certain reverend pastor in South Africa, while I might be a sorrowing bachelor."

"Dear me! how I should have been astounded if you had come wooing to me in that simple way! But I do not think a sensible girl could be offended at any new mode Walter adopted to make known to her his attachment—that is, if she really knew him."

"You have an exalted opinion of him, my dear; but he deserves it. I have often thought I should like to see him happily married, though I by no means wish to lose his valuable services. He would have very far to look to find a young lady more likely to suit his quiet tastes than Miss Maysen; and I shall be willing to further the happiness of the young pair, in any way that I can honourably do it."

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CHAPTER XIII.

"That marriage, rightly understood,
Gives to the tender and the good
A paradise below."—*Cotton.*

FOR a few weeks succeeding the events just recorded, Kate's life was undisturbed by any fresh excitement, and she went through her daily routine of duties with her usual steady diligence. Mr. Thompson did not speak another word of love to her, and there was no perceptible change in the quiet, respectful bearing which he had always shown to her. Kate was several times reminded by her watchful friend, Mrs. Wilton, that she assumed a somewhat dignified air whenever Mr. Thompson came into her presence. It can scarcely be wondered at if she did so, though she said she was unconscious of it.

Mr. Wilton wished to speak to Mr. Thompson about his professed partiality for Kate, but he was afraid of broaching the delicate subject abruptly. One day a favourable opportunity occurred for a long, quiet chat, as they rode out together to a distant part of the cattle run, to confer upon the erection of a dam or the enlargement of a water-hole on the estate. Mr. Thompson had taken much pains to draw out a plan and an estimate for damming up a blind creek, to store up water for the dry seasons; and as they rode along, he was again urging the importance of the project, when

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Mr. Wilton, after complimenting him on his engineering skill, and his knowledge of hydrostatics, rather archly remarked,—

"You are continually making or planning improvements on my estate, Walter, as if you meant to be a permanent resident here. You know that I thoroughly appreciate your services; still, I have often wondered that you do not think of getting a place of your own to improve."

"I am not tired of being happy, sir," responded Walter, with a smile.

"Come, tell me now, Walter, have you not some glimmering idea of making a home for yourself, and of getting a wife to ornament it?"

"It is a very natural idea, and I own that I have at times entertained it rather warmly; but I would not act precipitately. You know my dear father, sir, so I need not tell you that he is a man of great experience and of shrewd judgment in life affairs generally. Amongst other good advice which he gave me just before I last parted from him, he said, 'Do not choose a wife, my dear boy, until you have got to an age when your judgment will be, or should be, matured enough for you to select a lady who will be a helpmate and a congenial companion to you through life. If you wait till you are twenty-five years of age before you look out for a partner, you will be much more likely to make a happy choice than you would be if you allowed your feelings to master your reason, and entered the married state before you could call yourself a man, or before you had the wherewithal to keep a wife respectably; perhaps fascinated by the owner of a pretty face, but a vacant mind and a fretful temper.'"

"That is excellent advice, Walter; and you are a

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wise son to follow it. But you are now nearly twenty-eight years of age."

"Yes, I am old enough to trust my judgment, and I have made my choice of a partner; but I must see my way to provide a comfortable home before I go any further."

"Quite right, Walter. Your good father would tell you that is a very sensible decision. Now, may I ask you who is the young lady of your choice? I assure you it is not mere curiosity that prompts me to ask you this delicate question, and I hope it will not offend you."

"Miss Maysen is the young lady, sir," said Walter unhesitatingly. "I am sure she will make me a suitable wife, if I shall be so honoured as to call her mine by-and-by."

"Miss Maysen is an exemplary character. I have a high respect for her, and I could not wish you a better mate. But have you any reason to believe that she is willing to marry you?"

"I have not asked her that question yet; but I have a firm impression that she will be my wife if I ever get married. When I am able to maintain her in a respectable home, I shall ask her plainly to accept of my hand and heart."

"You certainly are a marvellously presumptuous young gentleman, Walter," said Mr. Wilton jocosely. "If I did not know to the contrary, I should imagine that you were excessively vain of your power to fascinate female hearts; at any rate, to talk so confidently of making Kate your wife, without even speaking to her about it, shows that you are sanguine of your power over her to gain your suit."

"I did not mean to say that I had not spoken to her about it, sir. I did tell her a few weeks ago that I

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believed she would be my wife, or words to that effect; but I am not sure that I was wise or prudent in expressing my thoughts so bluntly."

"Pardon me for laughing, Walter; but really your honest simplicity in love affairs seems to me almost ludicrous. You ought to know that most girls expect to be approached very tenderly on matters relating to their heart's choice. If you were to lose your lady-love, it would not be a marvel to me."

"It would be a trouble to me, sir. A union with Miss Maysen has been the hope of my life for more than two years."

"I will not try to disturb your comfortable trust in your marital destiny, my dear fellow! Nor will I pry into your grounds for such a remarkable confidence; but I know you will not mind my asking whether you think of embarking in pastoral or agricultural pursuits when you make a start off for yourself?"

"I should certainly prefer a sheep or a cattle station; but an agricultural or a dairy farm will best suit my limited capital."

"Did it ever occur to you that poor old Drake's farm would suit you?" asked Mr. Wilton, after he had ridden along some distance in silent reflection.

"I am half ashamed to confess to you, sir, that I have thought I should like that farm if it were to be let; but I would rather be an overseer as long as I live than it should be said that I wished to take a farm over another man's head. Mr. Drake has a nephew who would, I dare say, be glad to rent the farm."

"Mr. Drake's nephew is an intemperate young man, who would not do any good on the farm if he had it rent free. I happen to know that his uncle would not let him have the farm for love or money, and I also

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know that he would be very glad to let you have it on easy terms, because he wishes to see his poor Government men transferred to a good master before he dies."

"If I can get that farm honourably, I shall think that my way is clearly opening out for a settlement in life," said Walter exultantly; "and I will then make a more polite or more formal declaration of my love to Miss Maysen. I thank you very much for your kind interest in my welfare."

"You need not say anything about that, Walter. I owe you more than I can soon repay you, for your faithful services to me at a season of severe trials and losses. I repeat it, I shall be sorry to lose you off my establishment; still I am sure it will be vastly to your advantage to secure Drake's farm; besides, I shall be privileged to have you as a near neighbour, and my wife and daughters will be delighted to see you in a nice home of your own, and happily married to a young lady to whom they are so devotedly attached. Suppose we call at Drake's house on our way home? He will be pleased to see us, poor fellow! and you can then talk to him yourself about his farm."

"I feel a delicacy in speaking to Mr. Drake on that subject," replied Walter, after a little hesitation. "He may possibly fancy that the visits of condolence which I have often paid to him of late were in reality only reconnoitring expeditions—to take stock, as it were, of the conveniences about his snug homestead. I would rather not go to-day, sir."

"Very well; then I will see him, and perhaps it may be better for me to go alone. I think I shall be able to make the way smooth enough for you to negotiate matters with Drake to your satisfaction,—any way, I will

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try to do so. I am very glad I named this subject to you."

After examining the site of the proposed dam, and discussing the expediency of the undertaking, Mr. Wilton and his young superintendent remounted their horses. Soon afterwards Mr. Wilton struck off the road and across a swamp,—the nearest route to Drakeville,—while Mr. Thompson trotted homeward, in a very hopeful state of mind.

Mr. Drake, the owner of the farm alluded to, was a man beyond middle age. He had come to the colony some years before, a free emigrant, with the first Commissioner and the newly-appointed staff of the Great Australian Agricultural Company. He was sober and industrious, so he could scarcely help saving money. After a while he got a grant of land, and afterwards added to it by purchase. He had made up his mind to return to England, with a view to a matrimonial alliance with the lover of his boyhood, who had been left a widow; but his design was frustrated by the rapid development of a cancer, the fatal progress of which no earthly power could avert. He had for several years noticed a small red spot on his left cheek; but as it seldom pained him, he did not trouble about it. At length it began slightly to enlarge, so he consulted a neighbouring horse doctor, who said it was a cancer, and prescribed an ointment of his own invention, which he said would burn the disease out from the roots. It caused the poor man frightful torture, and the cancer rapidly increased in virulence. A skilful physician was called in, but he could not give any hope of a cure. Mr. Drake soon became a pitiable object to behold. He kept closely within his house, and refused to see any one but a few sympathising friends, including Mr.

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Thompson, who often went as a sort of missionary to the poor dying man.

When he knew that there was no cure for his malady, Mr. Drake sent to England for a son of his only sister to come out and take the management of his farm. The young man came promptly enough; but instead of being a help and comfort to his afflicted uncle, he was a sore trouble to him. Unfortunately he lacked manly firmness of character and moral principles, through defective home training, and from yielding to habits of self-indulgence, the long voyage to Sydney as a cabin passenger tended to confirm him in idleness. There was an unlimited supply of wine and spirits on the saloon table every day, and young Drake became an incipient drunkard. Soon after his arrival at Drakeville he formed an intimacy with several wild young men, and he became a willing companion in their profligacy. It was generally suspected that they stole cattle that were running in the bush, no matter who were the owners; indeed, they were a sort of Robin Hood gang, but perhaps lacking the chivalrous spirit which Robin Hood and his followers are said to have possessed. Many persons complained that the police were not very diligent in convicting these young thieves, because some of them were sons of influential persons. Whether that was an altogether unfair complaint, I will not pretend to say,—it is common for sufferers from robbers to blame the police unreasonably,—but I am sure that had the police been ever so anxious to catch the thieves at their nefarious work, it would have been a task of great difficulty, for they were very expert horsemen, and they knew every part of the bush intimately. Besides, they were immensely popular with the convict men all around, and they had any number of friends of that

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class to screen them. It was not an uncommon thing for some of those young men to spend several days and nights camping in the bush with a tribe of aboriginal blacks. Of course the white guests provided plenty of rum and tobacco, and there was an abundance of beef anywhere in the bush; so they usually had what they called a "grand corroborree," and it often ended in a drunken fight, perhaps caused by the jealousy of the poor black fellows being aroused by the flagrant intimacy of the tipsy youths with the young gins—or females of the tribe.

Mr. Drake grieved over his nephew's misdoings, but his remonstrances and entreaties were all in vain. He was too shrewd a man to trust a young fellow who was pursuing so reckless a course, so he left his farm to the management of a convict overseer, in whom he had more confidence than he had in his intemperate relative. That being the state of affairs, it may easily be imagined that Mr. Drake would be very willing to treat with such a safe man as Walter Thompson for the lease or sale of his estate.

The ladies at Yarramundoc retired to rest at the usual hour that night, but Walter sat up for Mr. Wilton. At midnight he came home, and after explaining that he had stopped to advise with the sick man about his will and other important matters, Mr. Wilton said, "I think the way is pretty clear now, Walter, for you to secure one of the snuggest homesteads in this district. Poor Drake was very pleased when I suggested that he should offer his farm to you; and I find that you are a special favourite of his. He will either lease or sell you the whole or part of his estate on easy terms, and I have so far presumed to bargain for you that I got him to promise not to offer the farm to any one until he has seen you."

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"I am very thankful to you, sir, for the trouble you have taken. It is certainly an unexpected piece of news to me, and I can hardly realize my good fortune. But I dare not think of buying the farm, for my capital is not quite £500. I should not like to involve myself in debt."

"You can take time to consider the matter carefully. Poor Drake is likely to linger on for several months yet; so you need not hurry over it. If you could buy the whole estate, it might be a fortune to you in a few years, for it must increase in value. But it is too late to sit up discussing it now; we will have a long chat about it in a day or two."

Walter lay awake for several hours forming pictures of domestic bliss, which he seemed likely to realize so much sooner than he had expected; and finally he dropped off to sleep to dream of his anticipated happiness in his own "sweet home."

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CHAPTER XIV.

"Hearts cry, 'God be merciful!'"—*Mrs. Browning.*

FOR the ensuing week most of Walter Thompson's spare time was occupied in considering whether it would be best for him to lease the whole or a part of Mr. Drake's farm. But, meanwhile, another important matter strove to fill the foremost place in his thoughts; it was a consideration of the proper form or method of making a polite declaration of love and an offer of marriage to Kate. He had no doubt that she would accept his offer if it were nicely tendered, although he might have been unable to give a logical reason for such a confident hope, for she had never shown any tangible sign that he was a special favourite with her; and with the exception of uttering the few words before noticed, he had never in any way tried to make known to her the love which had been growing in his heart, almost from the first month that she lived at Yarramundoc. He was conscious that he had blundered in saying what he did to her so abruptly and on such an inopportune occasion, and he was most anxious to avoid another mistake of the kind, which might seriously damage his cause. At length he resolved that he would first of all see Mr. Drake, and learn more definitely his terms of the sale or lease of his estate. Walter thought he would be able to propose to Kate with more confidence

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when he had the certainty of a good home to take her to. Accordingly, he set out one afternoon for Drakeville. On walking up to the house, he saw Mr. Drake's nephew sitting in a sunny corner of the verandah, smoking a black pipe, and looking as drowsy as idle young men usually look. He gave a nod of recognition to Walter's polite greeting, and said, "You can go inside. You'll find the governor upstairs."

When Walter entered the bedroom, he saw a great change in the sick man since he last visited him. He was indeed an object ghastly to look upon, for the malady from which he was suffering was doing its fatal work, and the poor fellow's agonising pains were continuous. In plaintive accents he bade Walter take a seat, and said he was very glad he had come, for he wished to see him to make an arrangement with him for the farm. He said he knew that his poor convict men would be well off with Walter, and he wished to assign them to a good master before he left the world.

"I would sooner that you had the farm than any other man I know," added Mr. Drake. "I feel under great obligation to you for many acts of kindness, and I am glad to be able to do you a turn, though it may seem to be rather questionable liberality to offer you what I can no longer keep myself. I know I cannot possibly live many weeks. I am in constant torture from this burning cancer, which you see has eaten one side of my face away, and has began to gnaw at my throat; but though I am virtually a dead man, I cannot let go my grip of my worldly goods. I lie here thinking about them day and night, and I grieve because I fear I am being robbed by those around me. Is it not marvellous? But perhaps I shall feel less anxiety after I have come to terms with you. My farm is a good

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one, as you are aware, Mr. Thompson; and I will sell it to you on very easy terms, or, if you do not wish to buy it, you shall have a lease for a long term. I am anxious to secure an income for that idle nephew of mine; but I wish to keep the control of my property from him; for he would soon squander it all, and perhaps ruin himself body and soul. Alas! that I should have toiled all my life to make money that will do so little good in the world."

From Mr. Drake's timid glances towards the door while he was speaking, Walter surmised that he was afraid of his nephew overhearing the conversation, which made it rather embarrassing to Walter; so he said to Mr. Drake, that he was willing and anxious to make terms with him for the farm, but would prefer that their mutual friend, Mr. Wilton, should be present during their negotiations, and he would also like Mr. Drake's nephew to be present, in order to satisfy himself that everything was fairly and properly arranged. Mr. Drake reluctantly assented to the suggestion, and Walter promised to ask Mr. Wilton to accompany him to Drakeville, on the first day that would be convenient to him. Walter was then glad to begin a conversation on a subject that was of infinitely greater importance to the sick man than the disposal of his farm and his cattle.

From a diffidence which was natural to his sensitive temperament, he had heretofore refrained from putting any direct questions to Mr. Drake as to his hope for the eternal world, which he was so soon to enter; and he had often felt self-reproved for not displaying more Christian-like courage. He had shown manly confidence in advising Mr. Drake on minor affairs, relating to his estate or his convict men or his cattle; but he had

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never had courage enough to ask the dying man if he knew the only true and living way to heaven. Walter's conscience appealed thus to him—that if he were to meet a poor fellow astray in the bush, and wandering away from the high-road to the township where he might get the food and shelter that he needed, he would not be afraid or ashamed to say to him, "You are going wrong, my man; and you will be starved to death in the bush if you keep on in that zigzag way. I can put you on a track that will lead you to a comfortable lodging-house." He would certainly not be afraid to do that kindness for the poor wandering stranger; then why should he be so diffident of showing poor Mr. Drake the way to eternal life? He had solemnly resolved before he set out from home that afternoon, that he would speak faithfully to the sick man; so after he had done talking about the farm business, he said gently, "Mr. Drake, I feel grieved with myself that I have never pointedly asked you what is your ground of hope for sharing in the joys which God has prepared in heaven for those who love Him. You know you must soon leave this world,—you have just told me so,—and I may not have another opportunity of asking you what are your prospects for the eternal world. Pray do now open your mind to me on this solemn subject. I may perhaps be able to give you a little help; for, thank God, I know the way to heaven myself."

The poor man lay silent for a few minutes, and Walter saw tears rolling down one side of his face; presently he said faintly, "I know it must be exceedingly offensive to you to sit in this room, Mr. Thompson. I am a repulsive object, so I will not detain you any longer to-day. I am thankful to you for this visit, but I do not like to keep you in this fetid atmosphere. Good-bye,

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my dear friend! Come again soon, or you may not see me alive. Please to ask my nephew, when you go downstairs, not to leave me to-night."

Walter took one of the sick man's hands and pressed it tenderly, as he replied, "Mr. Drake, I will not leave you until I feel sure that I have done my best, God helping me, to direct you the way to heaven. But tell me, first of all, do you know the right way to that home of rest and joy and peace?"

Mr. Drake replied, "I have never professed to be religious, Mr. Thompson; but I don't think I am much worse than many persons I see in these parts, who always go to church on Sunday, but they don't care what wickedness they do all through the week. There are so many different sects and churches, I could not tell which was the right one, so I never went to any; and I have avoided the jangling and bickering that I have so often heard among religious brethren, and which does not look a bit like religion that is good for anything."

"I am sorry to admit that there is much inconsistency amongst religious professors, Mr. Drake; but it will not be a valid plea for you or me that we are not worse than other sinners in the world. Salvation is a personal matter; and you may have it to-night, if you will accept it in God's own appointed way—through faith in the atoning merits of Jesus Christ."

"If you will please to go downstairs, and look on a shelf in my parlour, you will find a Bible," said Mr. Drake, without seeming to notice the great fundamental truth which had just been declared to him.

Walter went as directed, and soon returned with a large, old-fashioned Bible; but from its dust-covered state it was plain that it had not been opened for a long

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while. As he wiped its leathern covers, he quietly observed that it had not been used lately.

"You are right, sir; I have not looked inside it for years—the fact is, I am afraid to read it. If you turn to the front leaf, you will see my grandmother's name. She was a good woman, if there ever was a good woman upon earth. That was her Bible."

"Tell me why you are afraid to read it? You know it is God's own word—the truth itself; and it abounds with comforting promises."

"I don't think there is any comfort in it for me; and when I read it years ago, it always used to make me miserable; so I gave it up. I know I am as bad as the Bible pictures me, and there is not much chance for me in the next world. I have broken every commandment of God, except perhaps one or two—for I don't remember that I ever bore false witness against my neighbour, and I never bowed down to images; still, I have done sin enough to settle me eternally."

"And do you really fear that you will be lost for ever, Mr. Drake?"

"Alas! I do; unless, for the sake of my religious grandmother, and two religious aunts who died long ago, the good Lord will have mercy upon me. I often groan, as I lie here, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!'"

Walter scarcely knew what to say for a minute or two. He was staggered at the fact that Mr. Drake, a man of extraordinary shrewdness and intelligence on general subjects, should be more destitute of true wisdom than were thousands of the semi-savage inhabitants of the South Sea Islands, and other places where missionaries had been sent! That a cultured Englishman, who had lived all his days in civilized lands, where Christian knowledge was disseminated by thousands of

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human instruments, and by religious literature scattered broadcast everywhere, should be so thoroughly ignorant of the vital principles of Christianity as to rest the slender trust he had for mercy from God, for his life-sins, on the fallacious plea that a few of his near relatives had been religious! Yet so it was; incredible as it seems, I am stating a fact, that poor, unhappy Mr. Drake, fast drawing to the close of his life, was clinging only to that comfortless hope for escaping the penalty of his misdoings, and for insuring the rest of heaven.

After a little consideration, Walter knew that it would be a waste of time to try to argue Mr. Drake out of his vain belief; so he opened the Bible again, and read various passages, which most tenderly expressed the mercy and lovingkindness of God, and His willingness to receive poor sinners, however guilty and depraved they were, if they were truly penitent for their sins, and would humbly accept and acknowledge Christ as their surety or mediator, and believe with their hearts in the merits of His atoning sacrifice. While Walter was reading, he saw that the sick man's lips were moving as if in silent prayer, and tears flowed from his eyes. Presently Walter asked, kindly,—

"Do you not feel comforted by the Divine promises I have read to you, Mr. Drake? Listen while I read the last one again, from 3rd chapter of St. John. 'For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Can you possibly conceive of greater love than that? And, moreover, that Jesus should be willing to lay down His life for the sins of a guilty world—for my sins, and your sins—the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to glory."

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"Ay, it is such wonderful love that I do not understand it, sir. I cannot believe that it applies to such a sinner as I, who for more than sixty years have lived, I may say a godless life—have never done anything to deserve such love; but, on the contrary, have been constantly doing things for which I deserve to be sent to hell. I dare not hope that I have any claim to such love and mercy."

Walter opened the Bible again, at the first chapter of Isaiah, and read, impressively, "'Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' What do you think of that gracious, condescending passage? Does not that encourage you to believe in God's compassionate love?"

"It does, sir, while you are reading, arouse a spark of hope; but it is only for a moment. I feel that it would be hypocrisy for me to say I repent and am sorry for my sins, just as I am about to leave the world,—after I have sinned against my God as long as I had a relish for sin, and after I have totally neglected my God all my life long. And I even now feel sure that if it were possible for me to rise from my bed again, I should be more inclined to go on my old careless way than to serve God with all my heart. Besides, sir, I don't think you have any right to pick out the best or most loving words out of God's book, and offer them to such a wretch as I am. I hope you will excuse me for saying that."

Walter replied, "Of course you remember old Ned, the stockman, Mr. Drake, whom you prosecuted ten years ago for stealing cattle from you?"

"Yes; he got two years in Maitland gaol."

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"Perhaps you know that he is now a cripple, and unable to earn a livelihood? Well, suppose he were to crawl to your front door just now, and beg of you to let him gather a few peaches from your orchard, where you have a superabundance, what message would you send to him?"

"I would tell him to take as many as he pleased, or as many as he could carry. Rogue as he is, you do not think I would refuse him a little fruit, I hope, if he were to come begging for it?"

"No; indeed, I do not believe you could refuse him. And I am sure you would not forbid him to pick the best fruit he could find?"

"Certainly not; there are plenty of peaches on the trees, and he would be welcome to pick where he chose."

"Yes; I knew you would say that. By the way, I think you said, a while ago, that you were very anxious to secure a life-income for your nephew. Now do you really think that he has merited such generous consideration, by his acts of kindness and obedience to you, since he has been in this land, and especially since you have been laid in this sick-room?"

"No, no, sir; anything but that, I am sorry to say. He has been a sad trouble and a disgrace to me ever since he came to the colony—sometimes more than I knew how to bear; but he is my sister's only son, and he has no other relative in the land but myself."

"You certainly know that I do not wish to influence you against your nephew, Mr. Drake; for you will remember, that on several occasions when you have told me of his misdoings, which have grieved you sorely, that I have tried to find excuses for him."

"That you have, Mr. Thompson. Only for your intercession, I would have discarded him, when he so

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cruelly robbed me seven months ago. You have been a good friend to him, though he has scarcely ever shown you common civility."

"Now let me ask you, Mr. Drake, do you not think that our Almighty Father in heaven is as willing for you to comfort yourself with the rich promises in His holy word as you are to allow old Ned, the stockman, to help himself to peaches from your orchard?" The sick man did not return an audible answer to the question, and Walter added, "And do you not think that the merciful God, who has sustained you throughout your whole life, and has patiently borne with all your sinful neglect or contempt of His word and commandments—is not now as tenderly compassionate towards you as you are to your ungrateful nephew?"

After a short pause, Mr. Drake said with emotion, "I will not argue against either of your propositions, Mr. Thompson; but I hope it is not a sinful question for me to ask—if God is love, as the Bible says He is; if He is so full of tender compassion for His fallen creatures, why does He allow me to suffer the cruelly torturing pain that I endure day and night continually?"

Walter still held the Bible in his hands, and he turned to the thirty-third chapter of Job, and read, "'Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.' I have known persons who were suffering from severe bodily ailments, and from extreme poverty as well, say with overflowing hearts, in the words of the Psalmist, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted;' and I believe, Mr. Drake, you will yet acknowledge that your sad affliction is a blessing in disguise."

Walter stayed till near midnight, reading and praying

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with the sick man, until he acknowledged that he thought he could dimly see the wonderful way of redemption through faith in the atoning merits of Christ Jesus.

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CHAPTER XV.

"The air is full of farewells to the dying,
And mournings for the dead."—*Longfellow.*

"IMAGINE my feelings if you can, Emma, under this mortification! How can I soften my mind down to Murray's Grammar, or Rule of Three, or any other penance! The presumption of that little marine oddity is beyond anything that was ever heard of in civilized life!"

Thus exclaimed Miss Jenny, as she entered the school-room with her sister one morning, soon after breakfast. The mailman had shortly before left the post-bag, with letters and newspapers by the English mail. There was a letter for Jenny, written on embossed paper, with an anchor on top of the front page, cleverly drawn in Indian ink. Jenny was feigning to be very indignant at the temerity of Master Rogers in writing a letter to her; but, despite her wrathful-looking antics, there was an expression all over her pretty face which plainly indicated that she was pleased with the missive from the sprightly young sailor; and Emma perfectly understood that Jenny was only in fun. It was indeed a modestly worded epistle, a sort of brief history of his adventures since the pleasant voyage when Jenny was a passenger in his ship; and it wound up by informing her that he had been promoted to the post of third mate on board of a large ship in the Madras trade.

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"What do I care for his promotion!" continued Jenny, with a look of mock scorn. "How dare he presume to tell me that he has got a stuffed dolphin and a collection of seaweed and cowrie-shells for me! I should like to make him eat them all. Ugh! how his letter smells of pitch and tar!"

"Oh, Jenny, for shame! How rude of you to throw the poor fellow's letter into the coal-scuttle! I am sure he did not mean to affront you; and you ought to show the letter to mamma before you burn it."

"Of course I know that, dear. I am not going to burn it. Hand me the tongs, and I will carry it to mamma this minute; and I hope she will persuade papa to write to Mr. Third-mate Rogers, and to draw a big stockwhip for a frontispiece, just to frighten him. I'd anchor him if I had him here! Write to me indeed! I'll go and tell ma."

"Stay, Jenny, don't go into the parlour just now. I am afraid some bad news has come in the post-bag. I saw a letter with a black border."

"Oh, dear! why did you not tell me that before, Emma?" said Jenny, whose face suddenly became very serious. "Here have I been going on with my nonsense, and perhaps dear mamma is in trouble. How is it that Miss Maysen has not come in to begin school?"

'I don't know, dear; but I am afraid the black letter has brought some sad news for her. Let us go on with our lessons."

The letter had indeed brought sad news for Kate. It was from a clergyman in London, and was addressed to Mrs. Wilton. It stated, in feeling terms, that a terrible disaster had befallen the Maysens, who were his parishioners. The whole family had gone for a holiday excursion on the Thames, and the steamboat's

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boiler exploded. Mrs. Maysen and her youngest daughter were killed on the spot, Mr. Maysen was badly injured, and the other children were scalded, but not dangerously. Many passengers besides were killed or wounded, and the steamboat was shattered into fragments. That terrific mishap, the explosion of the *Cricket* steamer, is doubtless still in the memory of some persons who suffered either personal injury or bereavement on that sad occasion. After giving lengthy particulars of the present condition of Mr. Maysen and his surviving children, the clergyman requested Mrs. Wilton to break the distressing news to Miss Maysen, and also to offer his heartfelt sympathy and condolence to her.

It should have been before stated that Kate had written to her family by every mail since she came to Australia; and the arrival of a ship from London (which always brought a mail in those days) was one of the greatest joys of her life, for she invariably received letters from her father and mother; and about twice a year she got a welcome budget of news from each of her brothers and sisters. Many a merry laugh she had enjoyed with her two pupils, when reading to them the funny letters from her comical brother Harry, the didactic epistles from Fred, or the less pretentious notes from sisters Amy and Alice.

Mrs. Wilton felt quite unequal to the distressing duty of telling Kate the purport of the letter from her late pastor, and she sat for half an hour in sorrowful conference with her husband, without being able to decide upon any definite way of opening up the painful subject. At length they resolved to call Kate into the parlour, and then trust to their hearts' impulse what to say to her.

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Kate was in her bedroom, when a servant rapped at the door to tell her that Mrs. Wilton wished to speak with her. She forthwith hastened to the parlour, and her swollen eyes showed that she had been weeping. "You have some sorrowful news for me, I am sure, ma'am," said Kate, and she burst into tears when she saw Mrs. Wilton's face. "I apprehended it the moment I heard that there were no letters in the mail-bag for me. Pray tell me all, my dear Mrs. Wilton. I shall have strength to bear whatever I may hear. I am calmer now, you see: do tell me everything."

"Some of your dear relatives are ill, Kate," said Mr. Wilton, in a compassionate tone. He saw that his wife was not able to speak.

"Are they all living, sir?" Kate asked with suppressed feeling.

"I am sorry to say they are not all living, my dear —that is to say, they are not living on earth. But you know they were prepared for sudden death, and there is a blessed solace in that assurance."

"Who are dead, sir? Please to tell me at once. I can bear to hear all, better than I can bear this painful suspense."

"Your youngest sister is in heaven." Mr. Wilton's voice quavered out that sentence, and for a minute he hesitated, while Kate continued to direct a calm inquiring gaze at him, as if she were prepared to hear more. "Your dear mother is in heaven also, Kate."

Mr. Wilton saw her face change, and he sprang forward and caught her in his arms as she was falling to the floor in a swoon. The girls in the schoolroom, hearing an unusual stir in the parlour, ran in; and when they heard the cause of Kate's distress, their sympathy with her was warmer than words can express. Jenny flung

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her arms around the neck of the fainting girl as she lay on a couch, and her whole soul seemed to gush out in words of melting tenderness; while Emma, with equal affection, though less demonstration, applied such restoratives as were at hand. Presently Kate recovered consciousness, and tears came to the relief of her overladen heart. Her kind friends sat and wept with her, and for a while not a word was spoken. At length she said, in sobbing accents, "Would you mind letting me see the letter that you have received, Mrs. Wilton?"

"Yes, my love, you shall see it. I think you had better go to your room now, and I will bring the letter to you by-and-by. Emma, dear, you go with Miss Maysen, and stay with her till I come. No, no, Jenny; you had better stop with me." Mrs. Wilton then kissed the afflicted girl, and she went away to her bedroom, leaning on Emma's helping arm.

Mr. Wilton had gone out of the room, and had taken the good clergyman's letter with him, for the purpose of showing it to Mr. Thompson,—also to prevent Kate from seeing it until she was more composed in mind. As Walter read the letter, Mr. Wilton could see by his pale face and quivering lips that its contents affected him more than he dared to express. His manly heart deeply sympathised with Kate's distress; at the same time, the fascinating pictures of domestic happiness, which he had fondly hoped he was soon to realize, faded from his mind's eye, and his life's prospective was as dreary as a view over a flooded country on a stormy winter's evening. He returned the letter to Mr. Wilton, and after a few feeling remarks, expressive of his condolence with Kate in her distressing bereavement, he mounted his horse, which was standing by a slip-rail, and rode away to give some directions to the

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men who were at work at the new dam which he had planned across the blind creek. We will leave him to his solitary ride through the bush, and to his harassing reflections.

About an hour after Kate had gone to her room, Mrs. Wilton went to her. She was comparatively calm, and at her repeated entreaty Mrs. Wilton showed her the letter which contained such mournful news, whereupon her composure forsook her again, and for a time she continued to wring her hands in an agony of grief, and to exclaim, "My poor, dear father! My dear, suffering father! What would I not give if I were near to him, or if I only knew of his present state! Oh, why did I leave my beloved parents!"

Mrs. Wilton knew that words would not avail just then to stop the torrent of sorrowful feeling, so she sat by in silence until Kate gradually grew calmer. At length she asked, "What do you think I had better do, Mrs. Wilton?"

"Well, my love, I must consider very carefully before I express a decided opinion; and I will not venture to do it to-day. You may tell me what your own heart suggests at the present moment."

"It tells me emphatically that it is my duty to go to England as soon as possible, ma'am. I cannot possibly stay here and know that my beloved father is lying ill, —perhaps on his dying bed,—and with no one belonging to him able to nurse him; for what can dear little Amy do, even if she is not confined to her bed through her injuries? And the poor boys may need nursing also! Oh, I must go! I must go at once! I see and I feel that it is my duty to go, and nothing must stop me!"

"Now, my dear girl, do not say any more at present.

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Talking will only increase your excitement, and that will perhaps make you ill, and incapable of performing your duty; besides, you cannot carry out your affectionate designs immediately. In a day or two you will perhaps be able to look more calmly into the future; then whatever you resolve to do, I will assist you to the full extent of my powers, and so will every member of this household. You have many helping friends, love; but infinitely above all, you have an almighty Helper, who tenderly invites you to 'call on Him in the day of trouble.'"

"Oh, I do feel my utter weakness," said poor Kate, bursting into tears.

"Of course you do, I can see that; but look here, dear," responded Mrs. Wilton, opening her Bible, and laying her finger on Isaiah xxvi. 4: 'Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.' And look here again," she added, turning to Isaiah xli. 10: 'Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.' There is comfort for you, such as no earthly power can give, and it is expressly for you; so be still, my dear, and think of these blessed promises. Emma, love, you stay here for a little while. Perhaps by-and-by Miss Maysen would like to be alone, and if so, you can go downstairs and take charge of the house till I return. I am going with your papa to the township."

Mrs. Wilton kissed Kate fondly, then went out and ordered the gig to be got ready; and soon afterwards she started with her husband for Lashwell, to select necessary mourning for Kate at the store, and also to hire a needlewoman to go to Yarramundoc to work.

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Emma and Jenny stopped with Kate; and if kind words and loving caresses could heal a wounded spirit, her grief would soon have been dispelled. Happy would it be if every poor sorrowing mortal could find such genuine-hearted friends to condole with them in their bereavements, and to administer material help when necessary!

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CHAPTER XVI.

"Down came the storm, and smote amain
The vessel in its strength."—*Longfellow.*

THE next day the schoolroom was occupied by a needlewoman, who was busy making up mourning. Mrs. Wilton superintended the work, and did not consult Kate in any matter, save when it was really necessary. All school duties were suspended; and by way of withdrawing her mind as much as possible from distressing thoughts, Emma and Jenny devoted nearly all their time to Kate. They took frequent rides about the bush together, or rowed in the skiff up their favourite creek, and to the parts of the river that Kate had most admired. As she revisited these rural spots, where she had enjoyed so many pleasant hours with her loving companions, and as she gazed at the varied landscape beauties, which she dared not encourage a hope that she would ever see again, she could to some extent realize Dante's sentiment, that

"There is no greater grief in misery
Than to turn our thoughts back to happier times."

Kate could see that her considerate pupils were trying their utmost, by softened gaiety, to make her forget her troubles, and she strove to let them feel that their little kind devices were successful. She loved to watch the happy sparkle in their eyes when she smiled. But when she was alone, her grief would overflow, and

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then she for awhile thought that peace and joy were for ever fled from her breast. How hard it is to look beyond the mists and gloom of present trouble! And it sometimes baffles the faith of experienced old Christians to realize the supporting grace of Infinite love, when heart-pressed with heaviness through personal or family affliction.

Mr. and Mrs. Wilton held frequent consultations about Kate's affairs. They felt their responsibility as her deputed guardians, and they wished to perform their duty to her, uninfluenced by selfish considerations. They knew that her going would inconvenience them for awhile; for a competent governess, with desirable social qualities, was not very easy to find at that time. But they both agreed that it was Kate's duty to return home as soon as possible, and then came the first important consideration, what vessel should she go by? There were then no overland routes, or other comparatively smooth way of getting to England, no other way home than by way of Cape Horn. Nor was it expedient to send a young girl on such a voyage by any ship that advertised to carry passengers; but it fortunately happened that there was then a favourite passenger ship laid on for London, the captain of which was personally known to Mr. Wilton, so he resolved to go to Sydney and, if possible, secure a berth for Kate. When Mrs. Wilton explained that decision to Kate, she said,—

"I fear I can never repay you and Mr. Wilton for all your kindness, but I am sure I shall never forget it."

"Don't say any more about that, dear. It is our duty to help you all we can, and we do it willingly, for we both love you almost as much as if you were our own daughter. Mr. Wilton is going to try to secure a berth for you in the *Alfred*. It is a fine, large ship, and Cap-

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tain Brett is a friend of ours: we could place you in his charge with perfect confidence. Now, love, just cast your eyes along this list. I have written down every item I can think of that you are likely to want on the voyage, but perhaps I have forgotten something. You must have plenty of warm clothing and bedding, you know, for it is a dismally cold passage round Cape Horn. If there is anything else you think of, let me add it to the list, and Mr. Wilton will get it for you in Sydney."

"I had better not buy any expensive things, ma'am," said Kate, with a sigh. "I fear my poor, dear father will not be well off, and I should like to carry home with me as much of my money as I can. When my passage is paid, I shall have but little to spare for my outfit. I have £62 in Mr. Wilton's hands, I think, ma'am?"

"It is rather more than that, Kate. Mr. Wilton put your money into the savings bank as it became due, so you will have the interest to add to it. I do not know how much it is exactly; but I shall go to Sydney with you to see you safely on board ship, and you may depend on getting a satisfactory account of your money before you start. It is kind and thoughtful of you to save all the money you can to carry home to your poor, sick friends; but you must have a suitable outfit for the voyage, or the cold weather will kill you. Do not trouble yourself any more on that score, Kate; it will be all right, you will see. By the way, did I ever tell you of the terrific storm our ship encountered on our homeward voyage round Cape Horn, and the sad plight the dear girls and I were in for several days and nights?"

"I heard you and the captain speaking of it at the cuddy table one evening, ma'am; but I should like to have the particulars from you."

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"You shall hear about it, and may gather a few useful hints, as you are going to pass through the same high latitudes; but I would not tell it if I thought it would make you dread your voyage."

"You need not fear that it will make me more timid than I naturally am, Mrs. Wilton. I feel actuated by a sense of duty in taking this tedious voyage, and I believe that God will protect me."

"That's right, dear. 'The Lord shall guide thee continually.' You may not have such a severe storm to pass through as I had; but you must be prepared for a dreary time of it in crossing the South Pacific Ocean, from New Zealand to Cape Horn, even at the best of seasons. Only fancy a wide stretch of rolling sea, more than five thousand miles, that you go sailing over from day to day without seeing anything but sky and water! and the only living objects visible outside of your ship are sea-birds, and now and then a school of whales or porpoises. We did not see any land or any vessels after leaving Sydney, till we sailed between the island of Trinidad and Martin Vas rock. But we saw many icebergs when near Cape Horn."

"You found it very cold, I suppose?"

"Yes, indeed, it was cold, Kate; and the girls and I sorely regretted that we were not better provided with warm gloves and thick boots. Our considerate captain fitted a stove in the saloon, and kept up a good fire, or we should have suffered more intensely. But I am going to tell you of the storm which nearly overpowered our strong ship. The sea had been rough for a week before the storm occurred; indeed, we had scarcely seen it even moderately smooth since we left Sydney. But as we were nearing Cape Horn, the girls and I used to solace ourselves with the idea that though the wind was

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boisterous, it was blowing us swiftly onward, and that we should soon be over the coldest part of our voyage. One afternoon there was an unusual bustle on deck, and I heard the boatswain call out, 'All hands, shorten sail!' The second mate came into the cuddy soon afterwards, so I asked him if there was anything serious the matter on deck. He replied,—

"'No, ma'am; not much the matter yet. We are putting the ship under snug canvas, and sending down the light spars from aloft. We expect it will blow hard to-night.'

"I said, 'I think it is blowing hard enough now, Mr. Smithson.'

"'Oh, this is only a fresh gale, ma'am,' he said; and he hastened on deck again.

"Presently the carpenter came into the cuddy, and began to screw up the dead-light at each porthole. I was getting anxious, so I asked him what he thought of the weather. He curtly replied, 'We are going to get a breeze, ma'am.' A timid passenger will generally find it hard to get a plain, satisfactory answer from seamen, to inquiries concerning the weather.

"At tea-time the captain came below, and took his usual seat at the cuddy table. There were not any signs of anxiety on his face, and I felt much comforted. I asked him if he expected very bad weather soon, and he said cheerfully, 'The barometer indicates a change, and I have prepared for a blow. We may not get it very severe; but if we should, we have plenty of sea-room, and we have a good tight ship under us, and, above all, a merciful God watching over us. Don't be afraid, Mrs. Wilton. You are perhaps safer on board of a good ship in a gale of wind, than you would be in a gale on shore in a cheaply-built house.'

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"At midnight there was a change, sure enough. The wind howled through the rigging more wildly than I had ever heard it before, and the ship rushed along before it, like a runaway horse—to use one of Jenny's quaint similes. I saw frequent flashes of lightning, but I could not distinguish the thunder above the roaring of the wind and the flapping of the tattered canvas, for every sail that was set was blown into ribbons. Wave after wave struck the ship, and I fancied our ports would be driven in; added to all that, the constant tramping of heavy feet overhead, and the shouting of the officers and sailors, and it would be hard for one to picture a more exciting time. Poor Emma and Jenny clung around me, and I could not say much to comfort them. I seemed to be struck speechless with awe, although I felt in my heart a calm trust in my heavenly Father, such as I do not ever remember experiencing before in such a sustaining degree."

"Perhaps you never before needed so much sustaining grace, or were never in such terrible danger before?" softly interpolated Kate.

"You are right, love; and that is why I specially remember the Divine help and support I received on that occasion. I believe if you should have to pass through such a storm, you will be strengthened for the trial. And why should we wonder at special mercies? Are we not promised 'grace for every time of need'?

"Presently I heard the voices of sailors nearly under our cabin floor, and I thought the ship had sprung a leak, for the waves had been dashing very hard against the rudder. So I opened my cabin door, and asked the steward what the sailors were shouting for. He replied,—

"'Nothing, ma'am. They are only getting up a new

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fore-topsail and a storm staysail, out of the sail room, to bend on when the wind lulls a bit.'

"I need scarcely say that neither I nor the girls slept at all that night. We were glad when daylight came, although it was then even more terrific to us, for we could see through the cuddy windows the big waves leaping and foaming, and threatening every moment to engulf our labouring ship. At breakfast-time the captain came into the cuddy, looking haggard and weather-beaten. He had been on deck standing near to the helmsmen throughout the night. I watched his face very carefully as he was eating his breakfast, with more haste and less ceremony than usual. I could not see any traces of fear, although he looked anxious, and he was evidently not inclined for conversation. I had never before felt nervous at speaking to him, but I did on that occasion, for I was afraid of disengaging his thoughts from his responsible duties. Presently I ventured to say,—'I shall be glad when there is a lull in this fearful storm, captain.'

"'A sudden lull is what I most dread,' he replied; and he added, as he took up his oilskin cap, 'Excuse me, Mrs. Wilton, I must go on deck again.'

"When the chief mate came down to breakfast, I asked him why the captain so much dreaded a lull in the storm.

"'If the wind were to lull suddenly, we should have the sea tumbling aboard of us,' was the laconic reply, which was not at all consoling.

"Soon afterwards I overheard the steward tell the third mate that they ought to lay the ship to, instead of scudding her before such a dangerous sea; when the officer replied, 'If we were to try to lay the ship to now, the decks would be swept. We might have safely

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brought her to the wind last night, but we must keep her running dead before it now, let it blow high or low. This is the heaviest gale that I have ever been in, though I have been to sea eleven years.'

"That was a most trying day for every one on board. I never say that I am miserable,—I do not think any Christian should say it,—but I certainly was far from being comfortable. I really pitied the steward, for despite all his efforts to save his crockery and glass ware, his department must have suffered severe loss in breakages. The poor cook, too, had a troublesome time of it, for the sea broke over into his galley several times, and extinguished the fire in his stove, besides doing severe damage to his cooking utensils. Just before dark, I and the girls ventured on to the poop, and the sight of the raging waves was terrifically grand. We had not courage to stay more than a few minutes; indeed, it was not safe for us to stay there, for the captain told us that a heavy sea might break on board at any minute, and in such case we should almost certainly have been washed overboard.

"The night closed in dismally dark, and the wind rose to hurricane force. About nine o'clock, while the girls and I were on our knees at prayer, we heard the captain call out to the crew to hold on for their lives, and at the same moment a tremendous wave broke completely over the ship, flooding the cabins and the cuddy, and making sad havoc in the steward's pantry and store-room. Although I thought the ship was going down, I was almost as calm as I am now. I clasped Emma and Jenny in my arms, and in a few fervent sentences commended them to God. It would not be easy for me to describe the exciting work that was going on during the remainder of that awful night and for the whole of

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the next day. The ship suffered considerable damage to its rigging, but it weathered the storm. One poor sailor was killed, and several others met with slight accidents. Much of my luggage was injured by the sea water, and some of my best clothes were quite spoiled; but I did not grieve about my losses; I was thankful that the lives of my dear girls and myself were spared. That was a merciful deliverance that we shall all think of as long as we live. We are not likely to experience another such a storm at sea.

"Now I will not say any more on this dismal subject, Kate, or you may fancy I am trying to scare you from going to sea. I would advise you, however, to pack all your most valuable effects into small boxes or parcels, so that if you should meet with very rough weather, and there be danger of a sea breaking over the poop, you can easily lift such light packages into your berth, or somewhere else off your cabin floor."

After a few days' absence, Mr. Wilton returned to Yarramundoc. He had fortunately arranged that Kate should share a stern cabin of the *Alfred* with a lady and her daughter. The ship was to sail in about ten days, so there was no time to lose in making up the material for Kate's outfit, which Mr. Wilton had brought back with him.

It soon became evident to Mr. and Mrs. Wilton that Mr. Thompson was deeply concerned at the prospect of Kate's early departure. They did not let him know that they were aware of the cause of his unusual depression, but they nevertheless sympathised with him. They missed his cheerful conversation and geniality at the social board; and though his innate gentlemanly bearing was always noticeable, his quiet reserve and thoughtful look plainly showed the war of feeling that

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was going on in his breast. Each evening, soon after tea, he would retire to his bedroom, and till a late hour at night, and sometimes all night long, a light could be seen through his window. He was busy sewing together a quantity of opossum and platypus skins, which he had been for several years collecting, and had preserved with his own hands. After several nights' work, his task was completed, and there lay before him on the table a large opossum-skin rug, with a lining of thick scarlet baize; and a muff and a sort of tippet or cape made out of platypus skins, which were also warmly lined with woollen material, and an extra lining of green silk. In the finishing off of the latter articles, he had confidential aid from the needlewoman in the house.

He stood for a while gazing at his handiwork; and though any young man might have been proud of it, for it evidenced much patience as well as skill, Walter's face did not indicate satisfaction—on the contrary, it looked very sad. The rug and the muff and cape were for Kate, to be a parting present from him to the object of his heart's first love. For years he had secretly cherished a hope that she would be the sharer of his future life's joys and sorrows—his darling wife; but his cup of happiness was suddenly shattered at his feet, and his prospect seemed to be walled up to the skies by clouds of impenetrable darkness. Walter was as brave a young man as ever explored a new country or rode through a bush fire, yet the idea of parting with Kate on the morrow, perhaps never to see her again, overwhelmed him with tender emotion—almost made a child of him.

The morning was breaking, and golden streaks of sunlight were obscuring Walter's lamp, but he was pacing his room abstractedly. During that night of

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heaviness many plans and devices had passed through his active mind. The happiest-looking plan of all was to marry Kate at once, and accompany her home as her natural protector; but a little cool reflection showed that it was impracticable, even if Kate would agree to it, for what could he do in England for a livelihood, with so little capital and with less adaptability for home life? Then he tried to hope that Kate would soon return to Australia; but that hope was dispelled by the idea that she might perhaps find her father a helpless invalid—crippled for life, and she would, in that case, feel in duty bound to stay with him. Many other plans were thought of and discarded, until his brain was weary of planning, and his spirits were depressed almost beyond endurance. He had often before called upon God in times of trouble, and again he supplicated for help and solace from the Almighty Friend who had guided and protected his beloved parents through many years of perils and trials in their mission life, and whom he from his infancy had been taught to love and serve. No troubled heart ever sought in vain for comfort and direction from that Divine source, and after a while Walter's burden of trouble was lightened; and although he perhaps could not more clearly see his way in the future, he seemed to have a firm trust that it would be made plain by-and-by.

Throughout that day Walter's was the most hopeful-looking face in the household, and the ladies were glad of the help he gave them in cording the luggage. Most persons have had some experience in packing up, so they will understand without my describing it the busy time Kate and her friends had. Everybody was active, and there was not so much manifestation of sadness as might have been seen under quieter circumstances. An

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hour's work after tea completed the packing operations, and all was in readiness for the start next morning. Kate took a last glance around her bedroom, to see if she had left anything out of her trunks, and she dried the tears which started to her eyes as she closed her empty wardrobe; then she put on the most cheerful looks she could command, and descended to the parlour.

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CHAPTER XVII.

"First love and friendship steal upon my vision,
Like an old tale of legendary days;
Sorrow renewed in mournful repetition
Runs through life's devious labyrinthine ways."— *Goëthe.*

'I AM sure you must be quite tired, Kate; so pray sit down by the fire and rest yourself. Everything is packed up, you know, except a few little affairs that you can put into your portmanteau in the morning. Now, Emma and Jenny, you come with me, and let Miss Maysen have a quiet hour, for a treat. She must be growing weary of your caresses. Come along, dears; I want your help in the store-pantry." They then went out and left Kate in the parlour alone.

Mrs. Wilton had another reason for going beside the one she expressed. She thought that Walter might wish to say a few words to Kate before she left. She was right in that conjecture. Walter did wish to speak to Kate, and he was not blind to the opportunity which Mrs. Wilton's thoughtfulness had offered him. Taking his large bundle of furs in his arms, he soon afterwards entered the parlour where Kate was sitting in pensive meditation. The composure which he had maintained throughout the day forsook him at the first sight of his beloved one, but he soon recovered his self-possession, and said, in a tone which showed the tenderness of his feelings,—

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"I have brought you a trifling present, Miss Maysen, and trust you will favour me by accepting it. You will find the weather very cold in some parts of the voyage; and these furs, clumsily as they are sewn together by my unpractised needle, will perhaps be useful to you."

Kate, with faltering voice, thanked him for his kindness, and said she should no doubt feel the comfort of the nice warm furs in cold latitudes. She accepted his present with pleasure and gratitude.

Walter stood for a minute, as if striving to master some rising emotion, and then he said, in a manly voice, "My dear Miss Maysen, I wish to say a few more words to you, if you will kindly allow me. You will be leaving this house to-morrow, and neither of us can tell if we shall ever meet again. While I have condoled very deeply with you in your family bereavement, I cannot but be conscious that there has been selfishness mingled with my sympathy for your troubles, because they necessitate your immediate return home. Parting from you will be the greatest trial that I ever experienced. Pray let me speak out what my lips can no longer restrain," he added, as Kate was about to interrupt him. "I love you as fondly and truly as ever man loved a woman. For two years past the passion has been strengthening in my heart. My motives for not declaring my love to you long ago have been honest, and to my mind prudential. If you will bear with me, I will explain them as briefly as I can. In the first place, I feared lest our kind friends, Mr. and Mrs. Wilton, might not have wholly approved of our lengthened engagement, if I had been fortunate enough to secure your assent to such a tender compact. Situated as we both were in this household, and meeting daily in the family circle, I thought an engagement between

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us might have been objectionable to our worthy employers. I would make any self-sacrifice rather than disturb their feelings in the least degree. They are two of the most generous, unselfish beings in existence; still, I thought they might fancy that your mind would be less devoted to the advancement of your pupils, if they knew that we were lovers; and I dare say the compact would have somewhat encroached upon the time which we each have devoted to studies of a moral and intellectual character. Pardon my presumption in supposing that my addresses would have been favourably received by you; but though I can hardly explain the ground of my confidence, I have encouraged a growing hope that we were destined for each other. That hope sprung up in my heart a few months after you first came to this home. I had ample opportunities of observing your disposition and principles, as you are aware, and my attachment has been grafted upon a sincere respect and esteem for your virtues."

Kate tried to express her gratitude for his good opinion of her character, but her tongue failed her, and she hid her face in her hands, while he proceeded, in a voice which was often checked by emotion: "Another reason I will state—if you will kindly permit me—I dared not think of offering to make you my wife before I had the means of providing a suitable home for you. My prospects have not been at all clear to me in that way until a few weeks ago; and almost about the same time came the distressing news to you of your family misfortune, which has also been a crushing blow to my hopes of happiness. Some little time ago, my tongue hastily uttered two sentences to you, for which I have since been very sorry. I dare say you remember my rash words. The abruptness of my confession doubtless shocked you, but

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I am thankful to know that it did not quite offend you. My heart was overflowing with affection for you, and my tongue acted without the guidance of my judgment. Pray let me hear that you forgive that unintentional rudeness. Do tell me that my hasty words did not grieve you."

Kate withdrew her hands from before her face, and looked at him for a moment. She could not speak, but there was language in her tearful eyes which thrilled his soul like grand music,

"Thank you, my darling girl! A thousand thanks for that kind, loving look!" said Walter, and he impulsively put his arm round her neck and kissed her. It was the first kiss that he had ever imprinted on a woman's lips, and by the tender co-pressure, which was unmistakably distinct from a mere passive yielding, he felt, as convincingly as he could feel by the most glowing words, that she returned his love.

"My precious Kate!" he exclaimed, with rapture tinged with sadness, "you shall be my wife or I will never marry. I never loved any lady before I saw you, and I am sure I shall never love another."

Kate had perhaps read in some old-fashioned novel, of a similar declaration made by a fond youth, in the warmest glow of his first love emotions; and she had also read, further on in the story, that the same ardent lover forgot his emphatic promises three months afterwards, and went flirting with a new sweetheart. Any way, her common sense suggested that such promises were not very trustworthy, and she gently strove to stop Walter from saying anything more that he might afterwards regret saying; but she could not prevent his adding, that he would feel himself sacredly bound by his promise of perpetual love and fealty to her; but as

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an engagement with him might be prejudicial to her interests, he would extract no promise from her. He would be bound, but she should be free.

That was the substance of his quixotic promise, though, of course, worded far more tenderly than I can possibly describe it. It certainly was magnanimous on his part, and Kate could not but say something complimentary, which naturally led to other soft expressions and various innocent interchanges of true love's promptings that a stranger must never intermeddle with. No doubt it was pleasing to them, and it must have been very engrossing pastime; for when the clock struck ten, they both thought it was only nine. It was a timely hint, however, that the delicious conference must end.

"I fear I have encroached too long on your time, dearest," said Walter, and he gave her another loving kiss. "I will now say good-bye. I shall not see you start away to-morrow morning, for I have to be at the other end of the estate soon after daybreak, so this will be our last interview. Oh, it is hard to say adieu to one who is so dear to my heart!" he added, after a sorrowful pause. "But it must be so. I feel just now less resigned to the parting than I have been all day, still I believe that it is right. Your path of duty is clear. You must go to the help of your suffering relatives. I would not dare to stop you if I could do it. May the blessing of Heaven go with you! Farewell! my own darling Kate! my first, my only love, farewell!" He walked slowly towards the door; then, pointing to a small sealed parcel which he had previously laid upon the table, he said,—

"Take that little packet, my dear Kate! as a parting gift from me. Please do not unseal it till you get on board ship. Farewell!"

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It would be vain to try to describe poor Kate's overwhelming emotion after the door was closed. Her heart had long before apprised her that she loved Walter, but she did not know how much she loved him till then. There were no mortal eyes present to mock at her grief, so she did as many other love-lorn maidens have done—she wept till her eyes were swollen and her heart was aching with convulsive sobbing. For the time all her hopes of happiness in the world seemed to be withered, like a blighted flower, and even her faith in the all-wise providence of God seemed in that dreary season to fail to yield an adequate solace to her downcast spirit. She did not for a moment question the all-sufficiency of Divine grace, but she felt it almost impossible to realize the comforting strength and light she so much needed. Whose experience, I ask, has not at some brief season of heaviness corresponded with Kate's in that respect?

About half an hour after Walter's exit (which was perhaps the most trying time Kate had ever spent), Mrs. Wilton came into the room, with a tray in her hands, and a smile on her kind-looking face.

"Here, my dear! I have brought you some supper. I want to see you eat it, and then go to bed, for you must be over-weary. Emma and Jenny wished to come in and say good-bye to you, but I sent them off to bed, with a promise to call them in the morning an hour before the farm bell rings. Now Kate, dear, eat this nice rice cake, and listen while I tell you a whimsical story about our cook and a beggar man who called at the gate this evening; and you will see—if you did not know it before—that domestic servants sometimes have soft feelings as well as their betters. Come, sip your chocolate while I talk."

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Mrs. Wilton had a heart full of sympathy, and her head was well stored with practical wisdom. No one knew better than she did how to divert the mind of a poor, distressed mortal, from the peculiar trouble which was weighing it down to the dust. She could "weep with those that weep," and at the same time whisper into their ears words of tender condolence; but she knew that there were seasons when such demonstrative sympathy would be hurtful rather than helpful to the distressed one. Though there was not a whit less kindness in her motive, she sometimes used little innocent devices for leading the thoughts of her patient into some opposite course to the one from which the prospect seemed all murkiness and gloom; and she often had the satisfaction of seeing tears chased away by smiles. There is not overmuch sympathy in the world, as they who need it most can sadly testify; and it is pitiable to know that sometimes a good deal of that precious sentiment is wasted through lack of judgment in its administration. Mrs. Wilton knew that her lively story, about her cook's blunt kindness to a travelling beggar, would not permanently cure Kate's heartache; but she wisely reasoned, that if she could only make the poor girl forget her troubles for half an hour, it would be so much good gained for her. A short respite from pain of any sort, either mental or physical, is always in some degree comforting to the sufferer, and the smallest instalment of relief is better than none at all. Mrs. Wilton's little diversion was successful,—indeed, her devices of the kind never failed,—and she had the happiness of seeing the heavy cloud of sorrow for a while lift from Kate's pale face, and her eyes sparkle with interest in the narrative.

Mrs. Wilton surmised that Walter had been talking

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affectionately to Kate, and she also thought that Kate would wish to tell her something about what he had said; but she did not wish her to begin the exciting subject so late at night, for she needed rest after her toilsome day, to prepare her for another wearisome and exciting day on the morrow. Mrs. Wilton therefore, when she had finished the story about the beggar, and in order still further to divert Kate's mind, took up the little packet which lay on the table where Walter had placed it, and said, "What is this packet? Does it belong to you, dear?"

Kate innocently replied, "It is mine, ma'am. I do not know what it contains, but Mr. Thompson asked me to accept it as a parting present. He was in here about an hour ago, and I wish to tell you what he said to me, if you will please to sit down and listen."

"Not just now, dear. That will do for a little pleasant chat as we ride down the river in the boat to-morrow. I am sure you are too tired to talk much more to-night. Walter is very kind and thoughtful. You had better take the package upstairs with you, or you may forget it."

Kate took the packet in her hand for the first time, and after a strong effort to overcome the embarrassment it caused her, she said, "I think it must contain money, Mrs. Wilton. No other present that I can think of would be so heavy for its small bulk. What shall I do with it? If it is money, I do not think it will be right for me to take it."

"I hardly know what to say at this moment, love; but I will consider about it and tell you to-morrow. What did Walter say when he gave you the packet?"

"He left it on the table, ma'am; and as he was leaving the room, he asked me to accept it as a parting gift

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from him; but I was not to unseal it until I was on board ship."

"Oh, very well, then you can let it rest until you get on board ship. I shall go on board with you, and then we can decide what is best to do with this weighty little affair. Now we had better go to bed, for we must be up before sunrise in the morning. Good-night, my love!"

Mrs. Wilton kissed Kate fondly, and then they went to their respective rooms.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

"Farewell! a word that must be and hath been,
A sound which makes us linger, yet farewell!"—*Byron.*

IT was long before sleep came to the relief of Kate's aching brain that night, and she lay for hours revolving in her mind the interview with Walter. She remembered every word he said to her, and his every look was photographed on her heart. Often did she resolve to banish the exciting subject from her mind for awhile, and compose herself to sleep; but her fugitive fancy resisted her controlling influence, and presented again to her drowsy senses the scenes in her first love drama, from the moment when Walter first entered the parlour, with his useful present in his arms, to his final exit, after uttering farewell in that lovingly emphatic tone which still seemed to vibrate in her ears.

Just as the faint tinges of dawning day were appearing, Kate was awakened by the sounds of a horse's feet, and she at once surmised that it was Walter setting off on his ride across the estate. It must have struck her as a remarkable event for him to go to a distant waterhole before breakfast; and she perhaps rightly guessed that his going away so early was to save himself the distress of seeing her depart from Yarramundoc. But she had not much time for quiet reflection on the subject, for soon afterwards there was a rapping at her door, and then in rushed Emma and Jenny, and sprang into

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bed, one on each side of Kate, and began to embrace her with all the warmth of their affectionate nature. There they lay, a united sobbing trio, when Mrs. Wilton came into the room and separated them, by gentle reasoning combined with a little muscular force.

After breakfast came the final leave-taking. Kate said "good-bye" to the sorrowing servants of the household, from each of whom she had before received a little *souvenir*, and then she tore herself away from her devoted young pupils, which seemed like breaking her heart-strings. As the sun was showing his red face above the ridges of the distant mountains, Kate got into the boat with Mr. and Mrs. Wilton, and the willing crew received orders to pull smartly, so that they might not miss the steamer. Kate took a last tender glance at the hospitable home where she had spent three years of her life so happily; and as the boat turned a wooded point, which shut from her view the house and her beloved young friends waving handkerchiefs to her from the verandah, she covered her face and let her tears flow freely; nor did her considerate friends beside her say a word to check her grief until the boat drew near to the wharf at Lashwell, where they all embarked in the steamer for Sydney.

The next day Mr. and Mrs. Wilton and Kate went on board the ship *Alfred*, which was lying in the stream, ready for sea. Fortunately none of the other passengers had yet come on board, so Kate had a good opportunity to arrange her luggage in the cabin, in which operation her kind mistress lent valuable aid.

"There, Kate dear, I think we have done all we can do, so now let us sit down and rest a bit," said Mrs. Wilton, after she had given the finishing touch to the moreen curtains which she had just affixed to Kate's

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berth. "Everything is securely lashed and fastened, which is an important matter every passenger ought to attend to before going to sea. If you should meet with rough weather soon after you leave the port, you need not fear that any of your cabin furniture will be tumbling on to your toes, or be smashing to pieces while you lie in bed perhaps sea-sick and helpless. Now for half an hour's confidential chat, dear. You wanted to tell me something last night about Walter Thompson, so you may say it now. Mr. Wilton is in Captain Brett's cabin; they are old friends, and I'll engage they are not very dull, and they are not likely to disturb us. Walter told you that he loved you, I dare say? Yes, that was quite natural. I don't want you to tell me all the tender things he said to you—of course not," she added, seeing that Kate was getting embarrassed. "Just tell me if you are engaged to him,—that's all,—and then I shall know how to talk to him about you in future."

Thus encouraged, Kate gave Mrs. Wilton a tolerably clear account of the interview on the previous night, and the decision which Walter had voluntarily made; namely, that he would sacredly hold himself as engaged to her, but that she might consider herself free from an engagement.

"Poor fellow! He has a noble spirit—generous to a failing. He will make you a devoted husband, Kate, if such happiness is in store for you. God only knows what is in the future; but we know that He will arrange our lot for us infinitely better than we can do it ourselves. If it is God's will that you two shall be united, He will bring it to pass in some way that not one of us can see at present. You have been a discreet little maiden all the while you lived under my roof, Kate; I cannot call to mind any act of yours, in your daily intercourse

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with Walter in our family circle, that I could blame you for; so let that honest admission, which I know your own conscience indorses, cheer you and help you to hope for the best, when your drooping heart is disposed to dread the worst that can happen. You have something else to say to me, I can see by your eyes. What is it, dear?"

"I feel almost certain that this packet contains money, ma'am; and I do not think it is right for me to accept of it," said Kate, as she produced from her reticule the sealed parcel which Walter had given to her. "I wish you to return it to Mr. Thompson."

"Perhaps you had better first unseal it, and be quite sure as to its contents, Kate. You are on board ship now, you know."

After a minute's consideration, Kate with trembling hands opened the packet, and found that it contained one hundred sovereigns. She burst into tears as she handed the parcel to Mrs. Wilton, and sobbingly ejaculated, "Please take it back to dear Walter, ma'am, and tell him how grateful I feel for his unmerited generosity."

"Well, my dear girl, I had made up my mind beforehand that I would not say much to influence you in this little matter. I am sure Walter will be grieved if I take the money back to him; but if you really wish me, I will do it. All I shall say to you is, think another minute or two before you decide, Kate. Your family at home may be in need of many comforts which you will perhaps find it hard to procure for them. Money in one's pocket is handy, you know; and it is very inconvenient to be without money, even in such a wealthy place as London, the metropolis of the world."

"I have thought of all that, Mrs. Wilton; and I do

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not seem to have any misgivings about my finances. I think a way will be made for me to work for the support of my dear friends, if they should need it; but I shall not be happy if I carry this money away."

"Very well, love, you shall not go away unhappy on that account," said Mrs. Wilton; and she put the packet into her bag. "Perhaps you are quite right, Kate; now try to forget it. I will explain it all nicely to Walter. By the way, I must not forget to give you your account and your money: it would never do to send you away penniless. Here it is, Kate, all made up in mercantile fashion. Mr. Wilton thought that a bank draft for the balance due to you would be safer to carry than cash, so he got one on a London bank. You will see it inside this large envelope; and there are a few sovereigns too, which you may find handy for pocket-money until you can get your draft cashed. Stay, stay, don't open the envelope just now, dear. I have ten minutes more, and then I must go: you know how I would like to spend that short time." Mrs. Wilton then turned the key in the cabin door, and she and her weeping young friend knelt and supplicated the support and protection of the Almighty Being, "whose way is in the sea, and His path in the great waters."

Soon afterwards Mr. and Mrs. Wilton were on their way to the shore, and poor Kate was sitting alone in her cabin. My readers may imagine her state of mind as well as I can, and I need not attempt a wordy description of her tumultuous feelings. The envelope which Mrs. Wilton left with Kate contained a memorandum of the balance received from the savings bank, £64, to which Emma and Jenny added from their accumulated savings £36, making £100 in sum total, for which there was a bank draft in Kate's favour. There

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were also a receipt for her passage money, and a receipted bill for her outfit, with five sovereigns wrapped in it. The parcel likewise contained a testimonial, signed by both Mr. and Mrs. Wilton, which might have entitled Kate to a post of honour in Queen Victoria's household, if high distinctions of the sort were given according to merit or trustworthy qualities. At these last tokens of the great kindness and liberality of her dear Australian friends, Kate's gratitude impelled a fresh tribute of tears.

At daybreak next morning the *Alfred's* crew manned the windlass, and by the time they had the cable hove short, a steam-tug was alongside ready to tow the ship to sea. Kate came on deck and stood by the mizzen rigging, gazing pensively at the shore, and exchanging farewell signals with her dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Wilton, who were seated in a carriage at Mrs. Macquarie's Point. There they continued to sit, and occasionally to wave handkerchiefs to Kate, until the ship was hidden from their sight by the bluff rocks of Bradley's Head. An hour afterwards the *Alfred* had left the placid harbour of Port Jackson, and was rolling about on the restless waves of the Pacific Ocean.

Kate's fellow-voyagers were on the whole an agreeable company, the two ladies who shared her cabin were especially so, which was a cheering fact for her; for of all miseries in social life, none can be much worse than having disagreeable cabin companions on a long sea voyage. Captain Brett was as attentive to the comfort of his passengers as he was to his duties in general. His manly bearing and his commanding voice would help to inspire confidence in the most timid heart on board, while he was on the quarter-deck; and when in his arm-chair at the cuddy table, his gentlemanly

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joviality often made poor nervous Kate for a while laugh away her creeping dread of the huge waves, which were following the ship like raging sea-lions. All the little children on board loved the captain, which was a good sign, for children are honest judges of character. The man—be he seaman or landsman—that children shrink from as they would do from a growling dog, has not a genial soul; and I certainly would not choose him for an intimate friend, nor would I share a cabin with him if I could possibly help it.

Poor Captain Brett has made his last voyage. All the storms of life are past, and there is "no more sea" where he is now. He was not much beyond the average of life's meridian when death hailed him to "heave to." He braved many a fierce storm on the ocean, and safely navigated his ship through the perils and dangers of many voyages; but all his scientific skill and professional hardihood combined, could not avert the total wreck of his once robust frame by consumption's wasting blast. Not very long ago I stood beside his grave in a secluded cemetery on the bank of the Hunter River, and my memory the while flew back thirty years, and presented him as I first set eyes on him, a strong, handsome, sailor-like young man as ever mounted to a top-sail yard, or stood at the helm in a storm. "Let not the strong man glory in his strength," I ejaculated with a sigh, as I reflected how unlikely it seemed at that time that I should survive him. The osier may outlive the oak, for it will bend before the wintry gust which tears its sturdy neighbour up from its roots.

Kate had often heard her young pupils, Emma and Jane, speak of their cold and stormy passage across the southern ocean, so she was prepared for a dreary time of it. The weather certainly was rough and cold—it is

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seldom otherwise on that homeward route—but agreeable companions do much to mitigate discomfort, either on sea or on land. After a comparatively favourable passage of one hundred days, the *Alfred* entered the English Channel, and was safely towed up to Blackwall. The elderly lady who shared Kate's cabin, and who had shown her much motherly kindness, offered to accompany her on shore to her father's house. It was in the dusk of a chilly evening in March when Kate and her companion landed. They hired a cab and went straightway to Poplar. Kate's heart began to throb with varying emotions as the cab was driven into the well-remembered street, and stopped by her direction at the house wherein she was born. The sight of her childhood's home aroused many gushing recollections of her dear departed mother's love and tender care, and almost mastered the fortitude which she had summoned for the trial of meeting with her afflicted father. She sprang out of the vehicle, but her trembling hand was arrested ere it touched the knocker, by the sight of a placard on the door,—"TO BE LET."

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CHAPTER XIX.

"On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires."—*Gray.*

In her excitement at finding that her old home was deserted by her family, Kate was about to get into the cab again, without any idea where she was to be driven; but her companion, who was more composed, gave a smart rap with the knocker, which sounded through the empty hall, to Kate's ears, like clods on a coffin. Presently an old man opened the door, and after explaining that he had been allowed by the landlord to live in the house till it was let, he said that the former tenant was in St. Thomas's hospital, and that was all he knew about him. They got into a cab and drove straightway to St. Thomas's, where Kate learned that her father was a patient in the accident ward. The matron of that ward had a sympathising nature, which was evidenced by her actions as well as by her soft words. She explained to Kate that it was contrary to the rules of the institution for patients to see their friends at that late hour of the evening; and otherwise it would be undesirable that she should see her father, without some little preparation being made. The matron then kindly invited Kate to share her bed for the night, and promised to arrange for her to see her father as early as practicable the next day.

But all the kind matron's forewarnings to Kate, to

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prepare herself for seeing a sad change in the appearance of her beloved parent, were insufficient to fortify her heart against the awful shock which the first sight of her poor helpless father gave to her. There he lay on the hospital bed, the most pitiable object of suffering humanity that can well be conceived. Both his eyes were gone, and not a feature of his once handsome face was recognisable. His right arm had been amputated close to the shoulder, and the sinews of his left arm were so contracted that the hand was almost powerless, and his left foot was in a similar condition ; he was also severely burned about his neck and breast. There lay poor Thomas Maysen, as helpless as an infant. A man who but a few months before had been competent to fill the post of a first-class engineer in the British navy, lay there physically wrecked and ruined, beyond all hope of recovery.

It would do no good at present to consider the cause of the mishap which killed or maimed so many hapless victims. Whether it was owing to the cupidity of a niggardly owner, who allowed his steamboat to ply with a defective boiler, or to the incompetency of the engineer of the boat, or the rashness of a racing captain—I do not know to which of these causes the blowing up of the *Cricket* was attributable ; but this I do know, that I have been several times in danger of being crippled for life, or blown to atoms, through each of the causes above hinted at.

Kate was not permitted to embrace her poor father ; she could not even shake hands with him ; and her crushing sorrow at the sight of his misfortune prevented her for a while from speaking to him. But he could speak to her, and she could recognise his manly voice, though all visible traces of his former self were gone.

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His words proved that his heart was as full of tender affection for her as it had ever been. He expressed his deep concern for her sorrow, and for the heavy family responsibility which would now devolve upon her, in consequence of the death of her beloved mother; but he did not utter a murmur about his own sufferings.

What a softening lesson for an infidel would that hospital scene have presented! There lay a man, or the shattered wreck of a man, in as hopeless a condition, physically, as it is possible to imagine, but his mind was perfectly calm and clear, and his heart was full of faith and hope and love, which overflowed in words of comforting import to his weeping daughter at his bedside. If it were not Divine grace, I should like any sceptic to tell me, if he can, what it was which enabled that poor lacerated mortal to own, with a superhuman rapture, that he was unspeakably happy in mind, and that he knew his affliction would be for his good, in some way which his heavenly Father would assuredly reveal to him by-and-by? If it were not a Divine power, what power or influence was it that could make a man glory in infirmities such as those?

When Kate's mind became more calm, and she could speak to her father with a tolerable degree of composure, she learnt that her sister Amy was staying with their good pastor at Poplar; that her eldest brother, Fred, was apprenticed as an engineer to the firm where her father had formerly been superintendent; and that Harry, through the influence of the said firm, had been admitted to Christ's Church School. Each of them had been injured by the boiler explosion, but not severely, and they were then quite well. Kate stopped with her father as long as the nurse thought it desirable for her to stay, and then she went to Poplar to see her sister.

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The Rev. Mr. Allman received Kate with fatherly sympathy. She was formerly a teacher in the Sunday School attached to his church; and he had always taken a lively interest in her, as well as in every member of her family. By his considerate arrangement, Kate that same evening met her brothers and sister at his house. The re-union was a touching one, and must have been convincing to their kind pastor, who witnessed it, that a warm attachment existed between them. Fred was a tall, strong youth, in his sixteenth year, and Harry was much improved in appearance since Kate had last seen him. She felt her drooping spirits much revived by the presence of her two affectionate brothers, who, in addition to their robust personal development, showed marks of vigorous intellect, and of thoughtfulness beyond their years. Amy also had grown, but she was the same tender, timid creature that she had ever been. Mr. Allman soon left them together in the parlour, and promised to return in an hour, in case they might wish for his advice as to their future plans. During that mournful interim, Kate learned from Fred the particulars of the disaster which had made such sad havoc in their once happy family. As a wind-up to the distressing story, she was told that soon after the accident, their landlord's agent had sold all their household effects for arrears of rent; so their old home was completely broken up, and their family chattels had become the spoil of old furniture dealers.

When Mr. Allman returned, they were all recovering from the overflow of feeling to which they had yielded, and soon were able to converse with tolerable composure upon their prospects and plans in the future; their kind pastor joined in the discussion with much interest.

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"I should like to hear what you think is the best course for Kate to pursue, Master Fred," said Mr. Allman, in an encouraging tone. "You are her head man now, you know, so it is only right and courteous for us to ask for your opinion first of all."

Fred replied in a modest tone, "Kate wishes to take our poor father from the hospital, sir; and I wish it too. She has money sufficient to furnish a home for him, and to supply him with all he will need for a few months. If she were to take a small house in this neighbourhood, I could live with her. My present wages are ten shillings a week, and I daresay I might find something to do of an evening to increase my earnings. Then Kate thinks she might start a little school or get some fancy needlework, and Amy could help at that. Harry wants to go to work at something to earn a little money to help us; but we will not agree to that. He is now in a first-rate school, and if he keeps there and gets a good education, he will be better able to help us by-and-by, if we should need it."

"A very sensible opinion, Master Fred. I must congratulate you, Kate, on having such an able adviser. I am somewhat doubtful if the doctors will agree to your father leaving the hospital in his present condition; but by the time you have your house ready, he may be a little stronger. We shall see. Let us do all that lies in our power, and trust for help for all the rest from our Almighty Father. I cannot at present suggest any improvement on your plans, Fred, my boy, and I think they are quite practicable. Now let us all kneel down and ask God to prosper them."

The ensuing week was one of much exertion both of body and mind to Kate; but she seemed to have extraordinary supplies of courage and strength for every

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exigency. Fred obtained leave of absence from his employers, in order to help his sister to prepare their new home. With the aid and advice of Mr. Allman, they took a four-roomed house, within ten minutes' walk of Fred's factory, and furnished it as conveniently as their limited means would warrant. Kate then got her luggage from the ship, and in a few days she and Amy and Fred were once more in a home which they could call their own. Each morning Kate found time to go and visit her father, and when she told him that she was soon going to remove him to a comfortable home, which she and Fred had been able to provide, and that she meant henceforward to be his nurse, the poor man was for a time overpowered with grateful emotion; and he could only mutter thanks to God for blessing him with such dutiful, loving children.

After Kate changed her bank draft into sovereigns, it seemed a weighty lot of money in her pocket; but she found that it rapidly grew lighter while furnishing her new home. Carefully as she made her purchases, nearly half of her cash was expended, and she had bought barely enough to furnish three rooms, from the stock of a dealer in second-hand wares. Kate and her brother Fred were wholly inexperienced in bargain making; and their pastor, who accompanied them, showed as little adaptability for selecting furniture as a sailor would show in choosing stock for a chemist's shop. It was kind of Mr. Allman to go with them, but it is questionable if he were at all helpful. Had he not been there, Kate would perhaps have ventured now and then to try to cheapen some of the articles she bought; but she was fearful of encroaching too much on her respected pastor's time, so the broker got the price he asked for every article, without any argument at all, which was

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just the sort of dealing that he liked. No doubt he would soon have made a fortune if he had a few such pliant customers every day. Any simple person might have thought the broker was a very nice man, for he looked the picture of affability while Kate and her pastor were making their purchases. One large van carried all Kate's bargains to her new home; but it would probably have taken two or three large vans to carry furniture of similar quality for which the said pleasant broker would have given a sum of money equal to what he received from Kate, had she been a seller instead of a buyer.

In very few commodities of a non-perishable kind is the difference in money value so marked as in the exchange of second-hand household furniture. No doubt the said broker pointed out every scratch and imaginable blemish in Widow Poore's little iron bedstead when he was buying it from her. "It is naught, it is naught," said the broker, in estimating its value, and he backed his opinion by the paltry sum he paid her for it. But the bedstead wonderfully improved while in his dusty warehouse, if one might judge by his smirky eulogiums on its quality when he was selling it to Kate. I have heard of similar phenomena in other places, far away from London; how that some household effects have improved in value more than cent. per cent. a few hours after they were carted from the home of a distressed family, and huddled into an old furniture shop; and perhaps nothing in life is more apparent than the difference in the expression of a broker's face, when buying a household chattel and when selling it afterwards.

Kate had learned many useful domestic expedients from Mrs. Wilton, which she now tried to put to practical use. No housewives anywhere are more clever at

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extemporising in the furnishing way than the ladies in the bush of Australia. They can, if need be, make a smart-looking ottoman for the best parlour out of an old packing case; or a tolerably comfortable lounge for the dining-room out of a few rough logs of wood and a sheet of stringy bark, if they can get nothing better. Only give them a roll of chintz print, or a few yards of coloured baize or merino, and a paper of tin tacks, and let them have the help of a handy man for a few hours, and see what a cheerful change they will make in the aspect of a room which a short time before was almost as bare of conveniences as a soldier's sentry box. With the willing help of Fred and Amy, Kate soon put her little house in order; and if it did not look stylish, it certainly was comfortable.

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CHAPTER XX.

"The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
Lets in new light through chinks that time has made
Stronger by weakness: wiser men become
As they draw near to their eternal home."—*Waller.*

KATE was stimulated in her busy efforts to put her little house in order, by the hope that her poor father would soon share its comforts with her and her brother and sister; but in that she was disappointed. It was nearly two months before the hospital physicians would give their consent to his removal, and it was with much reluctance that they at length yielded to the repeated solicitations of the Rev. Mr. Allman to resign the helpless man to his daughter's care.

How much Kate wished her dear father could *see* the snug little room that she had provided for him, with the new white curtains to his bed, and a smart blind to the window, and three earthen pots of sweet-smelling flowers on the window sill; besides many little fancy articles on the toilet table, which she had worked with her own nimble fingers. But, alas! he was blind—unable even to distinguish day from night, except for half an hour or so each morning, when Kate moved his bed round, and let a slanting sunbeam fall on his emaciated face. But sunbeams do not linger long in the homes of a crowded city, so poor Mr. Maysen's days seemed very short ones.

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"The hospital nurses are kind in their way," he remarked to Kate one day, as she was dressing the wounds on his neck and breast. "They were as attentive to me as I could expect them to be, for they had many patients to look after besides me; and I dare say the constant exhibition of suffering in some of its most dreadful forms, tends to blunt their sensibilities to some extent. Their touch was not so tender as yours, Kate, my dear! But love makes the hands deal very gently with a wounded part."

Kate was indeed as tender a nurse as ever ministered in a sick room. Her touch was soft, her footstep was noiseless, and her voice was as soothing as sweet music to her father's ears. She would sit by his bedside for hours, and read or sing to him, or listen with silent attention to his kind words of encouragement and counsel. It cheered her exceedingly to see that he was so patient under his sufferings, and that he was so thankful for all her attention to him. It would have been no wonder to her if he had been somewhat peevish or irritable, for his pains were very severe; and she was prepared to bear with any little weakness he might display in that way, but she never heard him murmur, and very seldom did he even give vent to a groan or a sigh. When she one night made a remark on his great patience and fortitude, he replied, with his old expressive smile playing about his lips, "Don't you think it would be very ungrateful of me to yield to a fretful temper, Kate, while you and darling Amy and Fred are doing all you can to make me comfortable? I confess, love, that I have sometimes a struggle to master the risings of impatience, but I am beyond measure thankful that I have never been overpowered by it. It would make my sick bed indeed a bed of misery, if I were to encourage

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a murmuring spirit, for I should feel conscious that I occasionally grieved you, and that would grieve me, and mar the comforting anticipations which often fill my heart, of the rest that I shall soon enter into. Oh, I have a glorious prospect before me, Kate, my dear; and I seem to have a far clearer view of it now that my poor eyes are totally blinded to the attractions of earth. Mere human philosophy could neither comprehend nor explain what I am privileged to realize, in brief ecstatic glimpses. I do not like to speak much about it, even to you, dear, because language must ever fail to convey an idea of things which are immeasurably sublime. You know, St. Paul said he once saw things that it was not lawful for a man to utter. I believe, with our pastor, that St. Paul meant to say, that he had seen things which it was not possible to describe, even with his inspired tongue; and that is my experience at times. Are you crying, Kate, my love?" he added softly.

"Only a little, dear father; just for a minute."

"I thought I heard you sob, dear. But I hope you will not fret for me any more, Kate; for I tell you again, love, I am very happy. It is a good thing for me that I have been rendered wholly useless as a living man; for if I had the least hope of ever rising from this bed again, I should doubtless cling with one hand to the world, and perhaps be impatient to renew the battle of life, and my struggles for a share in the riches and honours and comforts of the world; but I have let go my hold of this world altogether, and that is the reason why my heart is so overflowing with heavenly peace. It is a glorious fact, dear, that though your poor father is lying here as helpless as a crushed worm, he has a foretaste of joys which no human ingenuity can ever imitate, or human tongue describe—of a peace which

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all the wealth of this great city of London could not purchase. Now let this truthful confession cheer you, dear; and I wish you to tell dear Amy and Fred and Harry what I have said. Don't grieve for me, if you can help it; and you may always feel assured that I am very grateful to you for your affectionate attention to me. Death will end my sufferings ere long, and you will have the abiding consolation of knowing that you lovingly performed your duty to the last."

Kate was the acknowledged head of the household, and she was looked up to by her brothers and sister with a deference which sometimes made her smile. "You have been all round the world, Kate, so of course you ought to know a vast deal more about things in general than either Amy or myself." That was Fred's response to Kate when she once playfully remarked that they left her the sole management of home affairs. Fred brought the full amount of his wages every Saturday night, and put it into Kate's hand, with the complacent look of an honest tradesman who had just paid all his old creditors in full. Had it been twice as much, Fred would cheerfully have given her every shilling of it, for there was no selfishness in his nature. But it seldom occurred to him to calculate how far ten shillings a week went towards finding him in food and raiment. He never reflected that it cost a week's wages for a pair of boots twice a year, and that he wore out his clothes very fast in the factory, for his work was of a smutty, rusty kind; and that he always had a smart suit of clothes for Sunday wear, with sixpence in his fine cloth waistcoat pocket for the church collection plate.

Fred was not unlike boys in general in his ignorance of domestic economy, for what lively youth do we know that troubles himself much about household matters,

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which properly belong to father's or mother's department? Youth is usually the season for implicit trust in parental catership for daily bread and sundries; and a wise confidence it is, as well as a necessary one, for it leaves the pliant young mind free for the nurture of those seeds of knowledge and wisdom which are calculated to make his after-life useful and happy. Fred was ever willing to help his sisters in anything they could suggest; and he always slept in his father's bedroom, and attended to his wants during the night, thus relieving Kate and Amy, who by turns kept constant watch over him by day. Fred also got up very early each morning, and did any little necessary job about the back yard or the kitchen, before he went to work; but he usually devoted his evenings to working out the system of self-culture which was propounded in two admirable little books he had read on the subject by Dr. Abercrombie and the Rev. Paxton Hood. His mind was always active, but it never was anxious about supplies of to-morrow's necessaries; all such minor matters he left solely to Kate's discretion.

But Fred was not destined to glide along in the easy groove which Kate's little hoard of money had so comfortably made for him; and in less than three months he was called upon to take part in serious discussions on ways and means, which were quite as new to Kate and Amy as they were to himself. It seemed to him, at a first glance, that Kate had suddenly awakened to the fact that her purse was getting lighter every day; but it was not a new discovery to her; she had often sighed over the reflection that money goes away very fast when there are four to keep in a family and house-rent to pay. She was as saving as she could be; but notwithstanding all the economy she knew about, there

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was the dreary fact as plainly as her figures could show it, that her outgoings nearly quadrupled her incomings. It was certainly high time to consider what was to be done; and there sat Kate and Amy and Fred one night, deliberately facing the matter in a prosy conference. It was at once resolved that their poor father should not know about their perplexities, and moreover, it was resolved that whatever shifts they might be put to, he should still have the little comforts which hitherto they had supplied him with from day to day. That point being soon settled, next came the more difficult question, put into homely words, "What can we do to make both ends meet?"

For awhile they all seemed to be ruminating over the question, as profoundly as politicians; presently Kate said, "I have been thinking of trying to earn something as a teacher. I saw an advertisement yesterday for a morning governess, and I will apply for the situation, if Amy thinks she can keep the house and attend to dear father while I am away from home; it will only be for a few hours each day."

"Oh, I am sure Amy can do that nicely," said Fred, in a hopeful tone. "I am glad you have thought of the plan, Katie. What salary would you get?"

"I don't know yet, dear; but however small it may be, it will be a help to us, if I can obtain the situation. What do you think of it, Amy?"

"I have never been left in the house by myself; but I think I can manage," said Amy, hesitatingly.

"Oh, you'll manage like a woman, I'll warrant," said Fred. "None of us know what we can do till we try, Amy."

A decision was soon come to, and Kate started into the city with all possible speed, and rather anxious lest

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she should be too late for the situation, which was in the family of a tradesman near Finsbury Square. I need not tell all about Kate's tedious negotiations with Mrs. Yates, I simply state that she engaged to teach three of that lady's children, four hours a day, for the moderate salary of twenty pounds a year. On her way home, Kate felt sorry that she had not consulted Mr. and Mrs. Allman before she made the engagement; but she was over-anxious lest the situation would be filled before she got there, besides, she felt diffident of troubling her good friends too often.

Three days afterwards Kate entered upon her new duties. From nine till one were the hours agreed upon. She rode in an omnibus from her house to the Bank, and then walked to Mrs. Yates' house. Her pupils were two little girls and one boy. The girls had been to a day school for a year, and Kate did not anticipate much difficulty with them; but her first look at the boy discouraged her, and she soon found that he was as restive and intractable as a young Australian bush horse. Master Peter was a spoilt boy, and a tyrant in the household. The servant called him "a perfect limb," whatever she meant by that epithet. He was turned five years of age, so it was time for him to learn something besides mischief, but he evidently did not think so, for he refused to begin to be a scholar, even to the extent of A, B, C. He was boldly defiant of the authority of Kate, and he laughed at his mother when she said she would tell his father as soon as he came home. Kate suggested that a rod would be useful in the schoolroom; but Mrs. Yates rather sharply replied, that her husband had a decided objection to corporal punishment.

Kate returned home very weary after her first morning's duties in her new situation. While she ate the

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dinner which Amy had prepared for her, and had kept it hot for nearly two hours beyond their usual hour for dining, she gave a graphic account of the vagaries of her boy pupil—how he had resolutely declined to obey her in any way; and when she had tried to maintain her authority, and keep him in the schoolroom by a little necessary coercion, he tore himself from her, and got out of the window on to the roof of a balcony, much to the terror of his mother, who sent the servant maid to ask the lamplighter to come immediately with his ladder, to take the boy down from his hazardous perch.

Poor Kate's experience in that situation was a severely trying one, and she often contrasted it with her former placid life in Mr. Wilton's family, with her docile pupils Emma and Jenny. After a week of battling and coaxing with Master Peter, and finding that neither system would tame him, she had to give him up as entirely beyond her management. She got on satisfactorily with the two girls; and she would gladly have continued in the situation for awhile longer, although the journeys to and from the house were wearisome, and the omnibus fares made a serious reduction in the small pay she received. But at the end of a month she was obliged to resign her situation, for Amy was afraid to stay in the house alone; and her father began to be anxious about her excessively nervous state. Many street hawkers and beggars knocked at the door every day, and some of them were so importunate for custom or for alms, and withal so impudent, that poor Amy was quite frightened at them. The sharp raps which some of the bold beggars gave at the door used to startle her as much as a carronade would affect some girls of a more robust nature.

Fred was sorry he could not always be at hand to

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talk to the beggars who scared Amy; but as that was impracticable, Kate again took the management of the household. Then once more came the momentous question, "What was to be done to keep the house over their heads?" They were sitting in the parlour downstairs, talking the matter over without their father overhearing them, when Fred spoke up in a hopeful tone: "I think, Kate, you might start a little school. Your testimonials show that you are well qualified for it, and I don't see why you may not succeed as well as hundreds of other teachers have done. There are lots of children in this street; and suppose you only take thirty scholars at a shilling a week each, that will make up the exact sum you say we want to pay our way with. What do you say to that plan of mine, sisters?"

Without much hesitation Kate replied, "In the first place, Fred, we have not a room in the house large enough for a schoolroom for thirty scholars; and if we had a convenient room, I doubt if we could get even a dozen children whose parents would be willing to pay a shilling a week each for them, when they can send them to the public school round the corner for a few pence a week. You must remember they are all poor people in this neighbourhood. Again, I fear that dear father could not bear the noise of children in the house, and you forget, Fred, that he needs much attention from me in the daytime, and there is the house-work to do besides. I think if you carefully look at your plan again, dear, you will see that it will not answer at all."

"You are right, Kate. I can see it won't do, without looking any longer at it. I had only glanced at it from one standpoint, and it is not safe to judge of important things in that way, as poor father has often told us. I shall get a small rise in my wages next year, but in the

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meantime what are we to do to keep a house over our heads? That's the rub, and I cannot see the way at all just now. By the way, let me say before I forget it, Katie, I don't mind wearing trousers or a jacket with patches on the knees or elbows, so don't you buy any more working clothes for me just yet, there's a dear. Patches are more honourable than rags; and we must save all we can till times improve with us."

"I like to see you tidy, dear," said Kate, with a sigh. "Now listen to my plan, which I think is a more practicable one than keeping a school in this small house, and in this poor neighbourhood. I have been thinking that I might get some needlework to do, and I will ask Mrs. Allman to recommend me to some shop where they give out work. Amy and I could do any sort of plain needlework, and look after dear father as well. I may get some fancywork by-and-by, which would perhaps pay better."

"A capital idea! Well done, Katie!" exclaimed Fred, with animation. "I see you have not travelled round the world for nothing. You are the girl for inventions; and if you were a boy you would make a clever engineer—that you would. Sewing is nice, clean, easy work. You can sit and sing at it if you like, and poor father always loves to hear any of us sing. It will be hard indeed if you cannot earn fifteen shillings a week; and if Amy earns say ten shillings, that all put to my earnings will make up thirty-five shillings a week, and I think we can manage with that till my wages are raised. I am quite willing to do without tea and sugar, butter, mustard, and a lot of other little nice things that you often put on the table, Katie. And I don't mind if I have a cold dinner every day, or even bread and cheese now and then."

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"You must have nourishing food, Fred, or you cannot work, and you will not grow up to be a strong, healthy man. Shall I go and consult Mrs. Allman about my plan now? Perhaps Mr. Allman will be at leisure, and if so I am sure he will give us his opinion about it, for he takes such a very kind interest in all our concerns."

"O yes, Katie, go and see about it at once. A good, sensible scheme cannot be put into operation too soon. If Amy will sit by father when he wakes up, I will go with you to the Parsonage. Run upstairs and put on your mantle, dear. Hurrah! We are the ones to scare poverty out of a house!" he added, as he kissed his sisters, whose faces were brightened up by the hopeful picture which Fred had drawn, of plenty of honest work, and a living remuneration for it.

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CHAPTER XXI.

"Variety's the very spice of life
That gives it all its flavour."—*Cowper*.

SOON after Kate left Sydney, Mr. and Mrs. Wilton began to seek for a "finishing governess" for their daughters; and they found it to be a more difficult task than they had anticipated. Their advertisement for a governess of superior accomplishments brought them a few written applications, and several young ladies applied in person. Some of them seemed to possess desirable qualities for home companions, and all of them were anxious for a good home. According to their statements, they had been educated in first-class schools, but had little or no experience as governesses. Only one applicant was a thoroughly trained teacher; but she had a decided objection to a country life, or "to go into the bush," as it was usually called in those days. Her nervous system would not bear the excitement and risk of travelling.

At a time when governesses of high qualifications were much sought for in Sydney, it is certainly no wonder that a lady, who could afford to study her delicate nerves, should object to go in the country, for travelling was a real trial of physical endurance and courage. Railways were not even thought of in Australia. The best of the main roads were dangerously rough to weakly passengers by coach, and there was the chance of being

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stopped or "stuck up" by bushrangers, in addition to the constant risk of the coach breaking down or upsetting. I have not had so much experience of colonial coaches as of coasting vessels, but I have heard tales of travellers' adventures on the southern and western trunk roads, in olden times, as thrilling as reports of North Polar expeditions.

A old friend of mine, a late well-known resident of Yass, once told me, in his quiet ungarnished style, of his ride down Razorback mountain on a coach drawn by four runaway horses. The tipsy driver had let the reins fall from his hand, but he managed to drive the fiery team with the whip, or he kept them from going over the side of the mountain. I have also heard another old traveller on the great western road tell of his often riding down Mount Victoria (four thousand feet above the sea level) in a mail coach, and the four horses going at a hand gallop, which was the speed those modern Jehus usually put on when going down a hill or over a moderately good piece of road, to make up for time lost in struggling through the innumerable bad places on the journey. Woe betide any unlucky traveller who was plodding upwards in a light vehicle when the flying mail came whirling round a curve in the narrow mountain pass! Either a "grand smash up," or a roll down the mountain side to the hidden depths below would be inevitable.

Though I have never seen the dreaded permanent bogs of Bargo Brush, which many ancient travellers on the southern road had opportunities of fathoming, I have been in less noted mud-holes in another part of the country, where there was no Government road inspector. I was travelling by a mail coach one day, when suddenly the wheels sank into a soft place up to the

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axles. The whip is a tool that is in more common use on bad roads than shovels and pickaxes—perhaps in the old fallacious notion that "there is nothing like leather." Our driver used his whip and his tongue at the same time; and in their tugging efforts to get away from the double torment, the two leading horses broke the hook at the end of the pole, and left us as disabled as a ship with her bowsprit gone. There were several ladies and children in the coach, and it seemed likely that they would have to stay in their seats all night, for we were miles away from a blacksmith's shop. The driver was not fertile in expedients, nor did he seem at all hopeful of getting out of the bog until good luck sent a bullock team to the rescue. I was the only male passenger, so it was but gallant or manly of me to bestir myself in the cause of the troubled ladies and their children. I was also reasonably mindful of my own personal convenience. At my suggestion the driver dragged a few fathoms of new one-inch rope from the boot of his coach, but he said he did not know how to tie a lashing on to the end of a smooth pole that would not slip off when a strain was put on it; so accepting the man's warranty that his leading horses would not kick, and his wheelers would not bite, I got down, and standing ankle-deep in the bog, I put my knowledge of nautical knots and hitches to good use, and lashed the swingle-bar to the end of the pole, securely enough to bear the strain of the tugging horses, and to carry the coach to its destination. The thanks I got from the grateful lady passengers, helped, for a minute or two, to withdraw my mind from the unpleasant fact that my shoes were full of mud.

Be it remembered, however, that such mishaps and troubles are things of the past, and travellers in New

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South Wales can now go for hundreds of miles north, south, or west, by railway, as smoothly as they can in England. Razorback Mountain, the great difficulty of the old southern road, is no longer dreaded by travellers; and Mount Victoria can now be ascended behind the iron horse perhaps faster than the old flying mail coaches used to rattle down the mountain pass, to the great risk of trembling passengers.

Mr. and Mrs. Wilton at length engaged a governess in Sydney, and she returned to Yarramundoc with them. But they soon found that it was expedient to dispense with her services. They were much concerned that their daughters were again left without an instructress, and they were arranging to go to Sydney to seek for one, when a circumstance occurred which led to their introduction to a suitable governess, who lived in their own district. As it may give a little idea of some phases of bush life, I will relate the incident, as briefly as I can.

Most residents in Australia have felt the discomfort of hot winds, which occasionally blow during the summer months. It would be difficult to convey, by any elaborate word-painting, even a faint conception of the enervating influence of those hot winds, which seem like fumes from an iron foundry. All animal and vegetable life are more or less injuriously affected by them, and human nature is drooping and spiritless. In cities or towns the dust which is raised by these furious blasts is not the least of the inconveniences, and tidy housekeepers specially look to their parlour windows and doors. Sometimes hot winds continue for several days, but they are almost invariably succeeded by thunderstorms, and hard squalls of wind from the south. Terrific as those storms are at times, they are welcomed

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with gratitude for the refreshing coolness they bring with them. The south, or the polar winds, are the natural refrigerators of the Australian climate, and without them the summer season would be almost unbearable.

It was after three days of hot winds that a thunder-storm of unusual violence burst over Yarramundoc, one evening, accompanied with hail, and furious squalls of wind. Mr. and Mrs. Wilton were much concerned for the safety of Mr. Thompson, who had left home soon after breakfast that morning, with a stockman, to go in search of some young colts, which had strayed out of the paddock into the bush. Mr. Wilton delayed the tea for an hour beyond the usual time, but Walter did not come home, and the whole family began to fear that some accident had befallen him. About nine o'clock, however, he returned, bringing with him a gentleman whom he had met with in the bush. They were both wet and fatigued and hungry, but otherwise they were uninjured by their exposure to the storm.

Mr. Bonner was the son of a respectable farmer on the upper part of the river, not many miles from Yarramundoc. It appeared from his lively statement that he was sailing down the Shining river in his boat when he was met by the storm. He was sailor enough to know that a heavy squall of wind was rolling up the bank of black clouds from the south, and he had reduced the canvas on his boat to safe dimensions; but the gale was too strong to beat against, so he moored his boat to a wharf on the river bank, and left his man in charge of it. He then made for the house of a neighbouring settler, and hired a horse to ride to Lashwell. It was a young horse, and rather wild-looking; but the settler said it was broken in, for it had been saddled four times; and though he was frisky, there was

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no vice in him. There was no alternative but to ride the animal or to walk, so Mr. Bonner mounted, and tried to set off on his journey. But he soon found that the settler's warranty of the horse was not a fair one, for it was a lazy, vicious brute. It first attempted to buck-jump (a peculiar habit of bush horses), but finding that it had its master on its back, it turned sulky and would have lain down but for some stimulating touches with the spurs. The owner said it was only playfulness, and that the horse would go along right enough after awhile and he took the bridle and led the snorting brute to the slip-rail. But no sooner was it out on the road than it again began to buck-jump in a desperate manner, as if it were determined to throw its rider. Mr. Bonner stuck to the saddle like a stockman, and it is well that he knew how to do so, for his horse started off at full gallop, and he could no more restrain the hard-mouthed beast than he could stop the thunder-storm.

It is not thoroughly safe to be on the back of a run-away horse under the best of circumstances. Perhaps there is not a high risk on a good wide road, if the rider does not lose nerve and if his saddle girths are sound, and withal, if his horse does not stumble; indeed, to some sporting natures it may be thought pleasant excitement. John Gilpin's involuntary ride to Ware and home again has been considered a funny adventure ever since it was first chronicled by poet Cowper. But to be run away with in a wild Australian bush is not fun; on the contrary, it is about as hazardous a mishap as can well befal a man on dry land. Mr. Bonner could make his audience smile as he described how he bobbed his head up and down, and hither and thither—like an excited music master—while striving to avoid contact with trees or overhanging branches, in his

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furious gallop through the forest; but he owned that during his five miles' ride he did not think his life was worth a moment's purchase; and he would not be willing to go over the same ground, at a similar pace, for all the reserved capital of the Bank of New South Wales. Happily he escaped with a few bruises and scratches, and some rents in his apparel. When his horse at length stopped from partial exhaustion, Mr. Bonner was in a part of the bush quite strange to him, and it is almost certain that he would have been benighted, but on hearing the smack of a stock whip he struck off in the direction of the sound, and was fortunate enough to meet with Mr. Thompson, who invited him to go with him to Yarramundoc.

Hospitality is one of the most noticeable features of Australian bush life. I have scarcely ever heard of a benighted stranger being denied a refuge either in hut or mansion: certainly, I have never been refused a temporary home in time of need; and on more than one occasion I have discovered, when too late to object to it, that my host had generously given up his own bedroom for my use.

Mr. Bonner was kindly received, as all respectable travellers who called were received and entertained at Yarramundoc. He soon changed his wet clothes for a suit of Mr. Thompson's; and after partaking of a good supper, he seemed to forget all his past risks and rubs, and to feel quite at home. It was soon discovered that he was fond of music; so Emma and Jenny, without much pressing, played some of their favourite pieces, and sang some of their sweetest songs, and Mr. Bonner felt so happy with his new friends that he was thankful to his tricky horse for running away with him to such pleasant quarters.

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In the course of the evening it was incidentally mentioned that Mr. and Mrs. Wilton were going to Sydney in a few days to engage a governess for their daughters, in place of the one who had just left them; so before retiring to his bedroom, Mr. Bonner said, with modest diffidence, that he knew a young lady who would be glad to get a good situation as governess. He added, "I may as well tell you, it is my eldest sister. She has been teaching for a short time in a school at Sydney, but she prefers the country to city life. I was going with my boat to meet her when the Sydney steamer arrives to-morrow at Lashwell, but the storm of this afternoon has spoilt my arrangements. I must get up betimes to-morrow morning, and walk to Lashwell, and then hire a boatman to take my sister and her luggage to the settlers' wharf, where I left my own boat."

"Has your sister had much experience as a governess, Mr. Bonner?" asked Mrs. Wilton. "I mean, does she understand the science of teaching?"

"I cannot answer that question confidently," replied Mr. Bonner, "but I believe she has sense enough to understand almost anything; and as she was educated at the most select school in Maitland, she ought to know something about the best methods of teaching." He then began, with honest warmth, to dilate on his sister's varied talents, and her amiable qualities, much to the amusement of Mr. and Mrs. Wilton and their daughters. Emma remarked to Jenny, after they got to bed, that she liked Mr. Bonner, because he was so fond of his sister; and Jenny said, she wished they had a brother to say such good things about them, though she wouldn't like to hear him tell fibs.

The next morning Mr. Wilton, who had in the meantime discussed the matter with Mrs. Wilton, offered to

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lend Mr. Bonner a boat and crew, to take him to Lashwell; and invited him to bring his sister to Yarramundoc, and leave her there while he went up the river for his own boat. Mr. Bonner thankfully accepted the kind offer, and that afternoon Miss Bonner was a guest under the hospitable roof at Yarramundoc.

The next day was stormy, so Miss Bonner was easily persuaded to stay until the weather was more favourable for her continuing her journey homeward. Mr. and Mrs. Wilton thus had a fair opportunity of observing some of the prominent characteristics of their guest, and in some measure of forming a judgment of her capabilities as an instructress. Without going into particulars of their negotiation, I may state that they engaged Miss Bonner as governess for their daughters; and the beginning of the following week she entered upon her duties in the schoolroom at Yarramundoc. The next time Mr. Bonner called to see them, Mrs. Wilton pleasantly remarked to him, that the storm which blew him there two weeks before, was the indirect means of introducing them to a young lady who had proved quite a treasure in their household.

If Mr. Bonner had dared to speak out the hidden sentiments of his breast, he would have said that the same storm had been the means of introducing him to a young lady, whose charms had affected his heart as it had never been touched before. But that was a secret, which he had not disclosed even to his sister. He was in love with Emma Wilton; and he had sagacity enough to judge that he had better not disclose that tender fact prematurely, or he might find that he was not a welcome visitor at Yarramundoc. Though Emma was nearly eighteen years of age, she was still a school girl, and it was not likely that her parents would

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sanction his addresses. He kept his love a secret; and his frequent visits to the house were put down to his excessive fondness for his amiable sister.

It would perhaps do no good were I to tell the objectionable traits in the professional governess who stayed so short a time at Yarramundoc, and I don't want to make mischief. But Mrs. Wilton made a satisfactory exchange. Though Miss Bonner was not very experienced as a teacher, she had been thoroughly well educated, and she had a natural tact or gift of imparting to others what she knew; besides, she had a conscientious determination to do thoroughly whatever duty she undertook. Emma and Jenny made fair progress under her tuition; her refined manners and high Christian principles were also very helpful in forming the characters of her devoted young pupils. After she had been at Yarramundoc about a year, an old squatter friend of Mr. Wilton's came on a visit to the house, and when there he made love to Miss Bonner, and was accepted by her. He was naturally impatient for her to enliven his solitary home in the bush; but she would not go till Emma and Jenny's education was supposed to be finished. She is now living in good style, in one of the fine mansions that grace the Darling downs. I shall have a little more to tell of her brother's true love experience, before I finish my story.

This very brief account of a double love affair, from real life, is another example of the simple way in which some important events have their origin. Poet Cowper humorously says :—

> "That great things from small may be springing
> Is proved by the engine's deep sob;
> And yet, after all, the beginning
> Was the kettle that sings on the ho "

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CHAPTER XXII.

"Who ne'er his bread in sorrow ate,
Who ne'er the mournful midnight hours,
Weeping upon his bed has sat,
He knows you not, ye heavenly powers."—*Goëthe.*

As Walter Thompson had given up, for awhile, all hope of getting a darling wife to share a home with him, he was not long in deciding that he would not purchase or rent Mr. Drake's farm. He knew it would be a great disappointment to the poor dying man, for he seemed to be very anxious that Walter should have the farm. He put off going to Drakeville from day to day, for he was naturally depressed in spirits after losing Kate, who had been for so long a time one of his daily companions. About a fortnight after his last visit, Walter went over one afternoon to Drakeville, to tell Mr. Drake as gently as he could the decision he had come to, and he felt a peculiar diffidence in so doing. On arriving at the house, he saw Bob Drake sitting in the verandah, smoking and dozing, as usual. On Walter inquiring after his uncle's health, Bob said, with a sort of half grin,—

"I don't know what's up with the governor. He has been laughing and crying and shouting ever since last Sunday night. I fancy he is light-headed with the awful pain he is suffering. He has been singing out for you a hundred times, and I meant to have sent for you to-night to come and pacify him."

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Walter went upstairs, and as soon as he entered the bedroom, Mr. Drake sat up in the bed, and, with his hands partially covering his disfigured face, he almost screamed, "Oh, I am so glad you have come, Mr. Thompson! Why did you not come before to hear my glad news? I am so happy! so happy! Thank God for sending you to read to me about my precious Saviour! Never did I expect to feel such joy as this—I cannot express it!"

As he sat and listened to the ecstatic utterances of poor Mr. Drake, whose beclouded mind the Holy Spirit had illumined with the light of life, Walter was much affected. He did not like to risk the peacefulness of the poor man's mind by saying anything about business matters, and Mr. Drake was too full of his newly-found joy to think of anything else. All he could utter were thanksgivings to God for pardoning mercy and grace. It was a very touching scene. Walter was anxious that Bob Drake should witness it, but he had gone for a ride in the bush.

"Mr. Thompson, I should like to die now, if it were God's will," said Mr. Drake with earnestness; "I have no fear of death now, but I have a fear of living, lest I should relapse into sin, and again feel that despairing horror which was overwhelming me when you were here last. Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, Lord; and I will continue to cry unto Thee to keep near to me, for if Thou shouldest leave me I shall surely fall."

Walter said all he could think of to encourage Mr. Drake to trust in the willingness and the power of God, to keep him from falling into sin; and he read several assuring promises from the Word of God, of help and comfort for believers. Walter stayed till a late hour that night; but not a word did Mr. Drake say about

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his farm ; and the only allusion he made to his temporal affairs was to ask Walter to come again to-morrow, for he wished to give him some instructions about receiving a sum of money from a debtor in Sydney, and paying it to sundry charitable institutions. On his way homeward, Walter's heart was full of gratitude to God, for making him instrumental in leading poor Mr. Drake to Jesus, the sinner's friend, for pardon and peace and eternal life.

The next morning Walter rode to Drakeville, as he had promised to do overnight. He was met at the doorway by Bob Drake, who, in reply to Walter's kind inquiry for his uncle, looked surprised, and said that he had sent a man over to Yarramundoc two hours ago, to say that Mr. Drake had died some time during the night. Walter replied, with genuine feeling, "Thank God ! All your poor uncle's terrible sufferings are over, and he has got safely home."

A messenger had been despatched to Lashwell for a doctor. When he arrived, he said that the death of Mr. Drake was caused by the cancer having reached a vein in his neck.

Bob Drake was heir-at-law to his uncle's estate. He said he disliked agriculture, and as he had plenty of money, he meant to enjoy it, instead of hoarding it up, as his uncle had done, for somebody else to spend. He soon sold the farm, and went to Sydney, and there squandered his uncle's hard savings. As it is not necessary for me to give the subsequent history of that profligate young man, it would be bad taste in me to do so, when I have more pleasing subjects to write of.

Walter keenly felt the absence of his beloved Kate ; but there was no mawkish sentimentality in his nature, so he did not try to make his face look wan and woeful

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child-like fretfulness, and he soon grew calmly resigned to his lot, and more thankful for the material comforts with which he was surrounded. The Christian-like submission and patience that he had recommended to poor suffering Mr. Drake, he tried to exercise himself; and after a while he could believe that, trying as his affliction was, it would eventually in some way or other turn out for his good.

It was nearly four months before Walter could venture out of his bedroom, on crutches, and it was two months more before he could discard those useful but much-abhorred helps. No poor wretch in a prison cell ever longed for liberty more ardently than Walter longed for the power to mount his horse again. Time kindly brought him the wished-for boon; and how his softened spirit gushed over with gratitude and delight the first time he took a canter through the bush, and heard his old pets the wild birds chirping out their notes of welcome, and felt the warm sunshine enlivening his bed-worn bones! Walter was himself again, though a few months before he had begun to believe that his disposition was permanently soured, and perhaps some of his neighbours were inclined to the same erroneous opinion.

Wollaston says, "Sick persons change their tempers as the seat of disease alters. And though men see daily instances of this, they do not reflect, but praise or blame the sick capriciously. Hence a miserable melancholic shall labour under a double disease—the internal one of his own bad feelings, and the external torment of pettish reproach; for some people will not allow such a sufferer to have any disease at all, but contemptuously call it whim, vapours, sullenness, etcetera. Such a perverted judgment is cruel. We readily excuse paralytics from labour; and shall we be angry with an

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hypochondriac for not being cheerful in company? Must we stigmatize such an unfortunate person as peevish, positive, and unfit for society? His disorder may no more suffer him to be merry, than the gout will suffer another to dance. The advising a melancholic to be cheerful, is like bidding a coward be courageous or a dwarf to be taller."

Walter was rejoiced at his newly-found liberty, and all the men on the farm were glad to see him about again. But he soon found that his constitution had received a severe shock, from his late accident and the consequent confinement to the house. His strength did not return as he had anticipated, his appetite failed, and he was most reluctantly obliged to treat himself as an invalid. Sympathy poured in from all quarters, but it did not make him well, neither did the many homely remedies which friends and neighbours prescribed, in the excess of their kindness; he gradually grew weaker, and a hacking cough disturbed his rest at night, and made him believe that his days on earth were few, At length he was persuaded to consult a physician of high repute in the district, who recommended him to take a sea voyage to some warm climate, as the most likely means to restore him to health and vigour.

"Do you think a voyage to England would benefit me, doctor?" asked Walter; and his heart bounded at the idea of duty leading him right up to dear Kate's door, which was just the direction that he had for months past wished that duty would point his course.

"The English climate would be too cold for you; and in your weak state I could not recommend you to venture round Cape Horn. I think you told me that you were born in a tropical country, Mr. Thompson?" said the doctor.

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"Yes, sir; I was born in one of the Society Islands. My father is at present living on an island not far from Tahiti."

"Then go and see your father, my dear sir! Nothing in the world that I know of will do you more good than a voyage to that part, and the sooner you start away the better. I wish I could go with you," added the doctor, who looked as if he wanted a change.

Mr. and Mrs. Wilton both added the weight of their influence to induce Walter to follow the doctor's advice, and presently he yielded; though he said it was hard for him to tear himself away from a home where he had lived so happily. His kind friends then began to busy themselves in preparing everything they could think of that would add to his comfort on his contemplated voyage.

"I wish I were sick enough to be ordered away to some nice mild climate for a change," drily remarked Jem Brown, one of Mr. Wilton's convict men, as he was cording up Walter's travelling trunk, a day or two before his departure.

"Do you mean to say you would like to be an invalid, Jem, for the sake of being coddled?" said Walter, whose kind manner always encouraged the men to speak to him with respectful familiarity.

"My word I would, sir! Stewed chicken and port wine, and other nice fattening diet, and a long spell with nothing to do, would be a rare change from my hard rations and rough bush work. I wouldn't mind being ill on those conditions, sir."

"Well, let me tell you seriously, Jem, that you [illegible] a mistake, as you would soon find. You ha[illegible] had much sickness, I should judge, from th[illegible] you."

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"Never was ill in my life, that I can remember, sir. I have had boils now and then, and a few bites from spiders and centipedes in the bush, and lots of splinters; but such trifles are not worth talking about. I never had the doctor to see me."

"Depend on it, Jem, that a sound body is one of the greatest blessings in life, and you have that, whatever else you may lack. I dare say there are thousands of men in the world who would, if it were possible, exchange wealth for robust health. Many pain-racked lords would perhaps gladly give their titles if they could insure such health as you have, Jem; so prize it, and do not commit any excess that will tend to make you an invalid, for there is much less satisfaction in being coddled than you imagine; and even stewed chicken is not a luxury to a man who has not an appetite."

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CHAPTER XXIII.

"Far from gay cities, and the ways of men."—*Pope.*

THE vessel that Walter sailed from Sydney in was a large American schooner, with very taunt masts and fore-and-aft sails—a favourite rig with American shipowners. No doubt they find it handy enough for their lake navigation, but it is not a desirable rig for a long sea voyage, and it is not always practicable to ship a crew who are smart enough to handle such a craft in a strong breeze. Most of the crew of the *Sylph* had been used to square-rigged vessels; and it was mainly owing to that circumstance that a series of mishaps occurred, which protracted the voyage and made it dangerously exciting, and withal too exhaustive of the strength of an invalid. Soon after leaving Sydney harbour, one of the crew, who was dozing at the helm, was knocked overboard through the sudden surging of the main boom, and drowned; and a few days afterwards, when running in a strong breeze, the boom guy broke, and the mainsail jibed over and sprung the head of the mainmast. Then a hard gale of wind set in from the south-east, and the vessel in her crippled condition was set so far to leeward of her course, that it was deemed expedient to make for the Friendly Islands to refit.

Vavau is one of the largest of the Tongan islands,

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though it is not quite forty miles in circumference. It has a fine expansive harbour or sound, which is easy of access; but the water is too deep for convenient anchorage. The captain of the *Sylph* was told, as a caution, by a missionary who came on board, that a trading schooner had lately visited the port, and her captain had let go an anchor in one of the numerous little bays or coves, and forty fathoms of his cable ran out before it found bottom. He had not strength on board to weigh his anchor again, and had to send on shore for help. The *Sylph* ran up to a secure, land-locked cove at the head of the sound, where there is safe anchorage even in the hurricane seasons, provided always that the ship has good ground tackle. Walter gladly accepted an invitation to make the mission house his home during the time the *Sylph* was necessarily delayed in the port refitting, and he soon found himself in very comfortable quarters, and was most hospitably entertained by the missionary and his excellent wife, in the mission house at Neiafu.

The three weeks that Walter spent there are among the sunny memories of his life; perhaps he had never before enjoyed such a season of rest and interesting recreation combined. There is a hill, appropriately called Mount Pleasant, about half an hour's walk from Neiafu. It was a favourite spot to which Walter often rambled, and he would sit for hours in rapt enjoyment of the lovely panorama before him. He could count more than a hundred small islands or islets, many of which were inhabited. Walter resolved to visit them all, if practicable; so he procured a small sailing skiff, and the services of an intelligent native man, and each day he would go out on his exploring trips. He was expert in the management of a boat, having had considerable

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practice in Sydney harbour, and that is perhaps one of the best places in the world to see smart boatmen.

The skiff was a very light draught of water, so when the tide was only at half-flood, Walter could sail over some of the coral reefs; and he often skimmed along for many miles, with a fresh breeze and the water as smooth as a table. There was no risk of a greater inconvenience than a wetting even if the boat had upset, when sailing in such shallow water, so Walter sometimes trusted his man to steer, and he would lean over the bow of the boat as it glided along over the vast field or ocean garden of coral, of various sorts and shapes, and he thought it was almost as beautiful a sight as a grand horticultural show. It certainly was a display, which to his fancy possessed more novel beauties than the choicest garden he had ever seen. But it was trying to his eyes to gaze long on the coral beds under the full glare of a tropical sun. It was curiously grand, too, to sail along so steadily just inside the break of the reef, and within a few yards of blue water, where the soundings were perhaps forty fathoms or more, and where the white-headed waves were curling and hissing, like legions of water-sprites trying to scare the little boat from venturing on to their domains. But Walter was not easily daunted by curling waves; and he often went for miles out to sea in his tiny skiff, which it was necessary for him to do in carrying out his design of visiting all the inhabited islands in the Vavau group.

The Tongan man, Philemon, whom Walter engaged as his attendant, had been to sea for a voyage or two, and had visited Sydney. He understood a little of the English language; and as Walter soon picked up a few Tongese words and phrases, they got along pretty well together. Phil was a shrewd fellow in his way; and,

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like some men who have been suddenly elevated to official posts in civilized life, he thought it good policy to magnify his office. It was a rare occurrence in those days for the natives of the Friendly Islands to see a strange visitor in their land, who was not either a missionary, or a trader, or a naval officer; and as Walter had no wares to sell, and he did not want to buy cocoa-nut oil or tortoise-shell from them, and he was not an "Agavacker" (captain of a ship), some of them were very curious to know who he was, and what was his social standing when he was at home in his own country. Phil explained to them, in reverential tones, that Missa Thomsoni was a "Papalangi Aga" (white chief), with plenty of fine clothes and plenty of dollars, so he was treated with becoming respect and hospitality wherever he went. Of course Phil came in for a full share of the good edibles which were freely provided by his kind-hearted countrymen for their honoured guest, and he seemed to be always ready for a feast, which was his glory and delight.

One morning, Walter left the mission house with his "man Friday," and set sail for an island about ten miles seaward. The breeze was fresh, and the sea was rather too rough to sail along pleasantly; moreover, the wind blew directly from the island, so it was what sailors call a dead beat to windward; and the little boat shipped water so often, that Phil had to be continually baling out to keep it afloat. When they were about halfway to the island, a large canoe full of native men came up to them; and as about a dozen of the men were pulling with their paddles, they could make the canoe go head to wind, so they soon left the skiff astern. In passing, a colloquy took place between some of the men and Phil, the meaning of which Walter could not gather,

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and Phil did not seem willing to explain it. After making another tack or two to windward, under reefed sails, and finding that the wind and sea were increasing, Walter told his man that he meant to run back to Vavau, and perhaps they would go to the island to windward on some other day when the weather was more favourable. To that Phil demurred very firmly—he was often respectfully bold in his address to his master. He urged that as they were more than half-way there, it was better to go on, for as they got nearer to the island the sea would be smoother, and that there was less danger in going forward than in running back before the topping sea. As a further inducement for his master to go onward, Phil said there were lots of good shells on the island. Walter was at length persuaded; and he kept on his course, but not without some misgiving that he was running an unwarrantable risk, not only of his own life, but that of his venturesome attendant. He persevered, however, and eventually reached the island; but his clothes were wet through, and what was worse, his day's stock of biscuit was all spoilt with sea water.

When Walter showed Phil the damaged state of their provisions, he said, "All right." It was a favourite phrase with Phil, as it is with many men who have had a more refined training than he. Walter thought he must certainly mean "all wrong," that time. When he had drawn the skiff up on a little sandy beach, he obeyed Phil's beckoning invitation to follow him into the bush, a short distance from the shore. There to his surprise, he saw the party of natives who had passed them in the canoe. They were all nearly naked, and they seemed to be busily preparing for a feast. Not one of them could speak English, so Walter was unable

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to discourse with them. They, however, returned his polite greeting, "Cheòtiofa!" (Good-day). Presently he saw smoke from a native oven rising above a clump of bushes close by, and the horrible idea rushed to his mind that he had been betrayed by Phil—had been lured by him into a pre-arranged trap, and that it was the intention of the naked savages to kill and eat him. As he glanced again at the smoking oven which was getting heated to cook him, he was so overcome by a spasm of terror, that he seemed to be powerless either to fight or to flee; but the next moment he sufficiently regained his presence of mind to partially hide his fears. Just then his man motioned him to sit down under a cocoa-nut tree, on a native mat which he had spread on the ground. Walter thought it was better to obey promptly, so he sat down on the mat, but with his face towards the tree, in order to be more on his guard against a sudden attack from behind. Presently a young native brought about a dozen drinking cups, made of cocoa-nut shells, from the canoe, and threw them on the ground. Walter shuddered again all over, as he thought the cups were to portion out his blood to his thirsty assassins. He had faced death in other shapes many times without being so completely unnerved; but the idea of being cooked and devoured by cannibals seemed to him so intensely revolting, that he broke out into a cold perspiration, although it was a very warm day.

Under the shade of a bread-fruit tree, close by, several of the natives were busy in manipulating old cocoa-nuts; and excited as Walter was, he watched their proceedings intently, for he fancied that every movement of those around him was in some way connected with his own tragical fate. One man was tearing the husk or outer shell from the dried nuts—a difficult operation for

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unpractised hands, butwhich the native seemed to accomplish almost as easily as peeling an orange. Another man took the nuts as they were husked, and by a tap or two in the centre divided them into equal parts; a third man scraped the white nut from the shell very expeditiously; while a fourth man gathered up the scraped pulp in double handfuls, and put it into the middle of a wisp of cocoa-nut fibre, and then twisted it very tightly, after the method of wringing the water out of yarn, in the process of bleaching it, and there exuded from the fibre a white, cream-like fluid, which was collected in an earthen vessel. Other natives were gathering bunches of green cocoa-nuts and bananas from the plantations around, and they all seemed in some way or other preparing for the forthcoming feast. Phil was not inactive; and Walter specially watched his actions, for he suspected treachery in all he did, and looked upon him as his executioner.

Presently Phil (with a peculiar smirk on his face, which Walter thought was a sardonic grin) intimated to him that they were going to open the oven; and Walter was about to make a last appeal to the merciful consideration of his faithless man, when an odour filled the atmosphere around, which, as Walter was uncommonly hungry, quite decoyed his mind for a minute even from the fear of a savage death. Wonderful is the influence of hot victuals! His eyes intuitively followed his nose, as it were, in the direction of the oven, and lo, they beheld a whole pig carefully lifted out, and laid on some kind of native substitute for a dish. The pig was steaming hot, and it appeared to be cooked to perfection, with the outer skin looking as unctuously brown and crisp as any gourmand would desire. Then there were hot yams, and sweet potatoes, and bread-fruit in abun-

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dance ; and last of all, though it may perhaps have been taken out of the oven first, was something wrapped in several coverings of green banana leaves ; that savoury morsel, also steaming hot, was handed to Phil, who forthwith took it to his master, and told him it was cooked for him. On tenderly removing some of the green envelopes, Walter found a baked pigeon, thoroughly well cooked, and with all the gravy preserved in its cover of banana leaves. Phil then brought him a small yam, a sweet potato, and a bread-fruit ; also a cocoa-nut shell full of the creamy fluid before noticed, which he called, "becky beck" ; he also brought several green cocoa-nuts full of milk, and some ripe bananas which were particularly large and luscious, having been gathered when fully ripe.

It would be impossible to describe the relief Walter's mind experienced at that unexpected turn in his lot. From sitting there under that melancholy tree, a living dead man—faint with hunger, and dreading every moment to get a fatal blow on the head from a cannibal's club,—to see at a glance, not merely that his horrible fear of being killed and eaten was groundless, but that there before his eyes and his craving appetite, for his own share, lay a dinner good enough for a hungry prince, and in quantity more than enough for three moderate eaters at one meal. In the overflow of his joy he chuckled to himself, "I shall never forget this feast as long as I live ;" and he began to dine, "Faka Tonga" (*i.e.* in Tongan fashion), using his fingers in lieu of a knife and fork, and a piece of banana leaf for a table napkin. He certainly could not fail to think of his part of the feast for a week afterwards ; for he was very hungry, and being over-tempted with the peculiarly luscious flavour of the "becky beck," as a sauce for his

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sweet potato and yam, he ate more than was good for his stomach, and was punished for his gluttony by the severest bilious attack he had ever experienced. It was clear to him that "becky beck" was too rich for his digestive powers, and he did not want any more of it for awhile.

The mysterious colloquy that took place between Phil and the natives in the canoe was an explanation on their part of their object in going to the island; viz., to have a quiet feast or picnic to themselves, after the style of Odd Fellows and other united brethren in civilized life. They had asked Phil to invite his master to their feast; but the hungry rogue knew that the mere prospect of a good meal would not have induced Walter to risk his life, by tacking five miles to windward in a strong breeze and a rough sea; so he said nothing about the feast, which was attracting him so powerfully; but he persuaded Walter that he might get some nice shells on the island, and perhaps see a turtle or two. After dinner, Walter made Phil understand his dread when he first landed on the island, that he was going to be clubbed, and cooked in the smoking oven. Soon afterwards there was a loud laughing chorus by the whole of the natives. Phil had told them of Walter's awful foreboding, and they evidently regarded it as a remarkably funny joke.

The wind was more moderate and the sea less rough in the afternoon, so the trip back to Vavau was delightful. When sailing pretty close to some high land near to the entrance to Vavau harbour, Walter noticed an opening in a cliff, something like the main doorway to some ancient abbey. In reply to his hastily put question to Phil, if they could go into the cavern, he gave his usual answer, "All right," so Walter up with

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the helm and steered for the entrance. Phil was anxious to take down the mast; but Walter, whose quick eye saw that there was height enough to pass through safely, bade his man to sit still, and they sailed into the cavern. For a few minutes, after they got inside, an almost overpowering feeling of awe filled Walter's mind, something like what he had felt when exploring the celebrated limestone caves of Binda, in the western district of New South Wales. The cavern was as large as Westminster Hall. Perhaps the roof was not so high; still it was grander even than the roof of that ancient building, for it exhibited innumerable vitrified pendants, which had run down when the igneous rock was in a state of fusion, and there they had hung for ages, like stalactites—or rather more like gigantic icicles. The sides of the cavern were precipitous, except at one part, where it sloped up to what seemed to have been the mouth of a crater. Walter thought he would indeed be a bold climber who attempted to get out of the cave by that aperture. The depth of water in the cave was perhaps twelve fathoms, with a bottom of white sand; and Walter could see numberless small fishes sporting about in the depths below, amongst the shells and sea-weed, and they seemed to give him a more poetical idea of a really quiet life than he had ever before conceived. Phil made Walter understand that in very rough weather the sea dashed into the cave with great violence, and sent the spray out at the hole in the roof.

As their boat neared the landing place at Vavau, they saw a canoe floating bottom upwards, with two men swimming alongside of it towing it towards the shore; and two women sat astride of the canoe, singing a native song or hymn, and keeping time to their voices by drumming on the bottom of the canoe. Walter

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promptly went to their rescue, but he found that they did not want any help. Phil interpreted for them, that it was "all right," and they would soon swim ashore. They did not seem to be afraid of sharks, although the harbour abounded with those voracious fish.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

"Breathe soft or loud; and wave your tops, ye pines,
With every plant, in sign of worship wave."—*Milton.*

IT was quite a merry time around the tea table at the mission house that evening, when Walter related his adventures during the day. He describe his feelings as he sat under the cocoa-nut tree on the island, waiting to be clubbed, in a quietly humorous style, which his hearers were highly amused at; but, at the same time, he could not fail to remember that the awful suspense, while the oven was being heated, seemed no joke to him at the time, but, on the contrary, one of the most grim realities he had ever experienced.

When Walter had ènded his amusing narrative, Mr. Watts, the missionary, said: "No wonder the natives laughed so boisterously when Phil interpreted to them that you fancied they were cannibals, and that they were going to eat you, Mr. Thompson. I have never heard of any authentic proof that the natives of the Tongese group, or the Friendly Islanders as they are called, ever were man-eaters, as some of the natives of other islands around undoubtedly are at this day. The fact of the natives you saw being all naked, is a sign that they are not 'Lotu' men, or Church members; at any rate, they do not belong to my flock; for you will no doubt observe, if you stay here a little while, that all the professingly Christian natives are

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decently clothed. You may see signs or tokens of bygone heathen superstition every day, for hundreds of the adult natives have had a little finger cut off, which was one of their heathen rites or ceremonies; but I do not think you could find an avowed heathen, man or woman, if you were to travel from one extremity of the Tongese group to the other, and here it can be truly said, 'the idols are utterly abolished.' If you were to ask for such a thing as an idol, or heathen god, you would create perhaps more surprise than you did when you mistook that merry picnic party for bloodthirsty cannibals. Mark me, sir, I do not pretend to say that all the inhabitants of the group are true Christians. I heartily wish I could say so."

"I suppose you mean to say that these islands are nominally Christian lands, as England and Australia are?" suggested Walter.

"Yes, that is partly what I mean; but I can say more for the public morals of this community, than you could say for the morality of Sydney or Melbourne, or even of London itself, the metropolis of the world. You will not find a licensed drinking house in this group of islands. Our wise and good king would not sanction such a trade; and I would almost guarantee that you will not see a drunken man during your stay in this port, unless he should get drunk on board your ship. 'Tis true that many of the people drink a good deal of 'kava,' that is a peculiar infusion of the root of a kind of pepper plant; but the use of that intoxicant is lessening as the people are becoming more enlightened. Our excellent king and queen set praiseworthy examples of sobriety and chastity, and other Christian virtues. They are both sincere and zealous teachers of the Gospel. Would to God that the kings and queens of

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all the nations of the earth were as truly religious as King George and Queen Charlotte of Tongataboo; then we should soon see that glorious epoch when 'the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God, as the waters cover the sea.' You will have an opportunity to-morrow of observing how the half-civilized Tongese 'Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy,' Mr. Thompson. Perhaps you may tell of it when you return to the great world; and at the same time you may say, if you choose, sir, that it is Missionary Watts' experienced opinion, that the conscientious observance of the Sabbath is one of the mainsprings of the general flow of peace, and prosperity, and contentment in this little kingdom. 'Righteousness exalteth a nation.'"

One of the first indications of the strict observance of the Sabbath which Walter noticed the next morning was the solemn stillness which everywhere prevailed. During the week-days there was always the noise of busy workers in the native villages, as well as the natural humming of swarms of young children, which are to be seen and heard in those islands as frolicsome, and perhaps as noisy, as elsewhere. Hundreds of women and girls were at work, from morning till night, beating out the steeped bark of mimosa trees, to make into a kind of cloth, called "tappa," which is extensively worn by the natives; the blows of their mallets on the blocks of hard wood producing a peculiar sonorous noise, like that which curriers make when they are beating hides in one process of dressing them into leather. But on Sunday morning every sound of human labour was hushed, and all the boys and girls knew that to behave themselves quietly on that day was their most comfortable policy.

Soon after ten o'clock, the "lala," or native drum,

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near the mission house was beaten, in slow, measured time, which was a summons to public worship. Walter walked to the church with the missionary's wife and family. Mr. Watts had gone to preach at one of the out-stations, and a native assistant missionary took his place in the Neiafu pulpit. The church, which was built of reeds and timber (cocoa-nut trees), was about ninety feet by thirty feet, and was in shape somewhat like an old-fashioned dish cover. There were about five hundred natives, young and old, in the congregation, and Walter was struck with their general devout manner, and the absence of anything like levity or flirtation. He noticed, too, that they were all clothed to a decent extent; but the grotesque costumes of some of them almost overcame his reverential feelings, and he could hardly refrain from laughing. For example, one sedate-looking old matron walked up to a prominent seat in the church, and she had on the skirt of a silk dress (without a body), which had perhaps in former years belonged to some sea-captain's wife, but she had it tied round her neck, and it reached a trifle below her knees; she also had on a large Leghorn bonnet with faded ribbon, but she wore neither shoes nor stockings. The dear old lady had no notion that she looked in any way ludicrous, and perhaps she thought she was uncommonly smart. One of the men singers was dressed in an old coat, which had probably been given to him by an officer of one of the ships of war which occasionally called in at the port. The coat was a size too small for the man; nevertheless, he squeezed into it; and for the sake of exhibiting the row of gilt buttons in front, he had the coat buttoned up to his throat, and he looked half choked. He also had on a sort of apron of native cloth, but no trousers.

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Other costumes were equally fanciful; but Walter soon lost all sense of the ridiculous, which the strange surroundings had at first excited; and when the congregation began to sing, he felt his heart moved, in a way that it had never been before by the grandest chorus of trained voices he had ever listened to, in Sydney or elsewhere. "Jesu, Lover of my soul! Let me to Thy bosom fly!" was the hymn they sang, in the Tongese translation, and the tune was "The Spanish Chant." Their singing was not classical, or very musical; on the contrary, their voices in general were flat, and some of them rather discordant, but their earnestness made up for all defects. It was the sort of natural congregational singing which Mrs. Beecher Stowe has cleverly described in the camp meetings of some of the slaves in the Southern States of America, in bygone years. The preacher was perhaps eloquent in his own way; of that Walter could not be a judge, but he had no doubt of the man's earnestness. Though Walter only knew the meaning of a word here and there of the sermon, he seemed to understand it all; and while the man was preaching, Walter was mentally praying, and he really enjoyed more spiritual comfort during that simple service than he had sometimes while listening to a special sermon from some learned minister of his own church.

Walter had additional proofs that day of the respect the natives pay to the Sabbath, for in the afternoon a ship came into the port from Australia. It was not often that a large ship visited Vavau harbour; and it might by some persons have been thought excusable, if a few of the natives had launched their canoes, and gone off to the ship, as many of them would have done if the ship had come on any other day. But not a single canoe was afloat, save that of the native pilot.

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Some of the natives sat under the cocoa-nut trees on the shore, and watched the ship as she slowly worked up to the anchorage; but there was no noisy manifestation of any kind to be heard. Walter could not help contrasting the decorous and self-denying conduct of the poor Tongese natives with the noisy excitement and clamour that would be witnessed in Sydney harbour, if the mail steamer, or any other attractive vessel, were to arrive there on a Sunday. There would be scores of watermen and tradesmen's boats out, making a harvest out of the new arrival, to say nothing of the many pleasure boats and yachts that would be flitting about the ship, owned by persons who had not even the excuse of the watermen and traders, that they were trying to earn a livelihood.

On the following morning, Walter was kindly invited by Mr. Watts to inspect the school at Neiafu. There were several hundred children of both sexes in the schoolroom, and they were all decently clad. It was a mere compliment, almost amounting to a joke, to ask Walter to examine the scholars in their various studies, as he did not understand many words of their language; still, he did inspect their writing, as each child walked past him and held up his or her slate, and seemed anxiously to look for his smile of approval. Several of the children, he thought, were deserving of small prizes, for the pains they had taken with their writing; and when his opinion was explained to them by Mr. Watts, there was a joyous expression on some of the young faces, and disappointment on others; so Walter generously told them that he would give a present to each boy and girl in the school, as a remembrancer of his visit. Among many other trifles which he had brought with him from Sydney, to distribute to the islanders in

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his travels, was a bag of marbles, agates and alleys and common marbles, all mixed together; so he sent to the mission house for his bag, and apportioned the marbles out equally to the scholars, each boy and girl having about a dozen. He also gave each child a picture, which was highly appreciated.

It was plain, from the puzzled looks of the children, that they had never seen marbles before, and did not know the use of them; so Mr. Watts and Walter had a game at shoot in the ring, in the school playground In addition to the school children, they were surrounded by scores of adult natives, who seemed as much interested in the sport as some of the old Grecians were in the Olympic games. Walter seemed to have the freshest recollection of his school-boy's experience at knuckling down, and he was by far the best player of the two. When he shot his taw into the ring, usually several marbles would fly out. He did not omit to say "dubbs," in accordance with the established laws of the game, and the wild shouts of delight of the natives every time Walter shot into the ring must have been very encouraging to him. Two or three games were played, and meanwhile, Mr. Watts explained to the eager boys and girls the minutiæ of the game, and they seemed to understand it, and were impatient to begin to play on their own account.

In the evening, when Walter was out for a stroll, he saw several groups of natives, some of them old men and even old women, playing at marbles with great earnestness. He heard each one shout, "tubbs," as he shot into the ring, evidently being under the impression that the word (which all English boys know is their own abbreviation of the word double) had some magical influence in sending the marbles out of the ring. If no

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one censured Walter for giving the natives of Vavau their first lesson in gambling, he did not escape so well for his misplaced zeal in teaching the native boys to make whistles and fifes out of reeds that grew by the swamps. Mr. Watts and his brother missionary said that Walter would have to be responsible for their sin in preaching old sermons over again, for it was impossible to make new ones, until they got used to the whistle nuisance, as students in London and other great cities have to deaden their senses to the intolerable pest and hindrance of street organ-grinders.

One of Walter's exploring trips was nearly having a tragical termination. When remarking, on one occasion, to a trader in Vavau (an Englishman), that salt might easily be made from the sea-water in that climate, where the almost vertical sun had such a powerful evaporating influence, the trader said that there was a sort of miniature salt lake, on a rocky islet, about eight miles to the north-east. The sea-spray, he said, in strong gales washed into an indenture on the top of the rock, and the water was evaporated by the sun, and left an immense deposit of salt. Walter thought he would like to see that natural salt factory; and if there was a ship-load of salt there, it might be a paying trip for him. The trader gave him the bearings of the island, and steering directions to get into smooth water inside the reef, and he added a caution, "You had better not attempt to sail through the channel, Mr. Thompson, for it is very narrow, and crooked; and if you should get on the reef, you are done for, you know."

Soon after breakfast one morning, Walter started for the island, with his man Phil. There was a moderate breeze, and the cruise over was delightful. When he got near the island, he took in sail, and put out the

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sculls, and passed through the narrow channel, into a circular basin or boat harbour, where the water was quite smooth. The island was a bare, igneous rock, without a particle of vegetation on it. Walter soon climbed to the top of the rock, and he then experienced a disappointment, similar to what many other travellers have felt, when following the direction of guide books, in quest of wonderful sights. There certainly was a large hollow basin in the rock, and it is likely enough that the sea-spray washed into it in very heavy weather; but instead of the immense collection of salt he expected to see, there was scarcely enough to pickle a mackerel. No doubt the rain, which falls there frequently, had washed away the salt as fast as it accumulated. The heat on the rock was almost unbearable, so Walter prepared to start again; but he soon found that getting out through the reef was more difficult than getting in, for the breeze had freshened and caused more surf on the reef; and the glare of the sun on the foam, and on the white sandy bottom of the harbour, made it very dazzling to his eyes to look at. It was vain to expect aid from Phil as a pilot, for he had never been to the rock before; moreover, he could not, any more than his master, gaze on the glaring water. To attempt to get out without clearly seeing the channel would have been madness, for if the boat got on the reef, it would have been knocked to pieces; and in that isolated spot the venturesome explorers would almost certainly have been starved to death, for it was seldom that any one visited the rock, or even passed near to it. It seemed clear to Walter that he was caught in a sort of natural trap, and after straining his eyes till he was almost blind, he began to have doubts of ever getting out again. Fortunately, he did not lose his presence of mind, or it is

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very likely that both he and his man would have lost their lives. After awhile he hit upon an expedient that suddenly occurred to him. He took off his waistcoat, which had a dark lining, and made two small holes in it to see through, then tied it over his head, and to his great joy he found he could see the channel through which he had come in to the basin; Phil then put out the sculls and Walter steered, and they were soon safely through the intricate passage, and once more on the bosom of the blue sea, and on their way back to Vavau.

In passing one of the islands they saw a party of natives in a canoe, fishing, and they had been pretty successful, for their canoe was nearly half full of fish. They were just about to raise the anchor and go on shore to lunch, and they invited Walter and his hungry man to lunch with them. On landing, one of the men carried with him a basket containing about half a bushel of fish, which looked like white bream. He flung them alive and leaping into a native oven, which had previously been heated to cook yams, and covered them up in the usual way with banana leaves. When Walter got over the shuddering fit which the cruelty of the cook had caused, he fancied how untempting the fish would look when they were taken out of the oven, for they had not been scaled or cleaned in any way. But in about half an hour all his qualms on that score vanished, for when the oven was opened, the odour was most reassuring. Presently Walter saw a man take a fish from the oven, and rip it open with a shell, and out came all the entrails in a compact, round ball. Then he held the fish up by the tail, and drew his finger and thumb gently down each side, and all the skin and scales came off as easily as an old glove. He then laid the fish on a banana leaf, and handed it to Walter, who sat down under a

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cocoa-nut tree and ate it, without salt, and he enjoyed it more than he had ever enjoyed a fish before. No doubt it was because he was uncommonly hungry; but he really thought the fish was cooked in a style fit to dish up for a nobleman's table.

The three weeks that Walter spent at Vavau passed so pleasantly that he was almost sorry when the repairs to his vessel were effected, and she was ready to sail again. He could not soon forget the affectionate demonstration of some of his native friends on the morning of his departure, many of whom followed him down the harbour in their canoes. The captain of the *Sylph* engaged to take some cargo to Tongataboo, so Walter had an opportunity of seeing a little of the most important island of the Tongese group, as it was then the residence of the king and queen.

I should have before stated that Walter carried with him letters of recommendation from influential persons in Sydney to missionaries and consuls in many of the South Sea Islands, in case he might be accidentally drifted from his direct route to Tahiti, and he found those letters very useful. He was again most hospitably entertained in the house of the resident missionary at Tonga, during the days that the *Sylph* lay there. He also was kindly received by the king and queen, when he went on two occasions to the palace with the missionary. He was honoured with a seat in the king's pew at church; and one evening at a bolutu, or prayer meeting, in the church, the king, who presided over the meeting, invited Walter to a seat beside him. There were more than eight hundred natives present on that occasion, and it was plain, from the general earnestness manifested, that there were not many mere formal worshippers. Walter was invited by the king to address the assembly, which he

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did, with the assistance of the missionary, who acted as interpreter.

King George was a fine-made man, rather over six feet in height, and with a well-shaped face, which expressed intelligence, kindness, and royal dignity. Walter was told that when the king was a few years younger, he could manage a double canoe to perfection, or dive under water and turn a turtle over with marvellous adroitness and courage. He was also a brave warrior, and was held in reverence and wholesome dread by the savage natives of Fiji, which is about 200 miles westward of Tonga, and is now a British colony. But though never unprepared for war with his enemies, if dire necessity compelled it, King George was a man of gentle, kindly disposition, and he was a teacher and a preacher of the gospel of peace. Walter thought it was the grandest sight he could well imagine, to see a despotic monarch sitting as leader of a prayer meeting of nearly a thousand of his loving subjects, and to hear him offer up humble prayer to the King of kings, for guidance and help in every time of need; and also to hear the fervent responses of the assembled host, to the supplications of their king-leader to the throne of heavenly grace. It was a touching spectacle; and Walter thought it had made an indelible impression on his heart.

The awful event which I am now about to notice, parenthetically, has no connection with Walter's history, for it occurred years after his visit to Tonga; still, as it is a remarkable proof of God's merciful care for the lives of his missionary servants, I feel warranted in giving it a page in my book. It will surely be interesting to some readers. The place where the event happened, the ship and the officers of it, and all the passengers on

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board at the time, were well known to me. The particulars were told me by several of the passengers, and also by the captain of the ship, who is a valued friend of mine. I will now give the substance of their narrative, in fewer words than they gave it to me.

The mission brig *John Wesley* was on her voyage from Vavau to Tonga, with several missionaries on board, who were going to attend the annual church meeting at Neucalofoa, the capital of Tongataboo. The weather was fine, the sea smooth, and the vessel made fair progress. She had nearly run her distance at two o'clock on the morning after leaving Vavau, and was within a few miles of the anchorage at Tonga; so sail was reduced, and the vessel was hove to, to wait for daylight; for it was impracticable to enter the port at night, as there were no guiding lights through the intricate channel.

At about three o'clock a.m., the chief mate, who had charge of the watch on deck, noticed something like a curl on the water a short distance off to leeward; but believing that the vessel was miles away from any reef, he fancied it was the reflection of the moon, which was just then behind a cloud. Ten minutes afterwards, however, he heard the unmistakable seething noise of the surf on a coral reef, and the vessel was being set by a powerful current directly on to the breakers. He at once aroused the captain from his berth, and there was a general stirring among the crew and passengers. Sail was got on to the ship as speedily as possible, but there was not wind enough to work off shore against the extraordinary current, which soon sent the doomed vessel crashing on to the reef, where she continued to strike heavily. All on board knew that the ship could not float long; and though there was no consternation or panic, there was

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naturally much concern shown for the safety of their lives and of their personal effects. The captain and crew were actively preparing to launch the lifeboat, which was large enough to carry all hands. The missionaries (who could be of no service on deck, but were rather in the way) went below to the saloon, to pray to God for help in their time of need. While they were all on their knees in earnest prayer, they heard the captain shout, "Avast there, at the boat's tackles! Hold on for your lives, my men!" The next moment they felt the ship lifted up in the air, as it were, and then descend with a violent shock on to the reef. They rushed on deck, and saw an immense wave rolling towards the mainland, while all around them was white, seething foam. All hands looked astounded at the awful phenomenon; but when they had recovered a little from their amazement, they took soundings, and to their great relief found that the ship was lying on a flat reef, in about three feet of water, and of course was perfectly free from danger of sinking or breaking up.

It appeared that while the crew were getting the tackles ready for hoisting out the lifeboat, the captain saw a huge wave or a mountain of water rolling towards the ship, so he called to the men to stop hauling on the tackle-falls and to look out for themselves. He expected to see the wave roll on board, in which case the ship would have been broken into fragments, and perhaps all on board would have perished. It was no doubt a few moments of intense anxiety to every one on deck as they watched the wave advancing—a wave of such unusual form and magnitude; but instead of breaking over the vessel, it lifted her bodily up and bore her onward for several hundred yards, and then left her lying on a flat corally bed, and as still and safe as if she were in a

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dry dock. Not a man on board was hurt in any way; and as the ship was perfectly tight, her cargo sustained no injury. The missionaries were taken on in the ship's boat to Neucalofoa. Before they left the ship, they held a thanksgiving service on the main deck.

The earthquake wave (for such it was), which so providentially saved the lives and property of all on board the stranded ship, rolled some distance inland and washed down a few of the native houses, but caused no loss of life. The *John Wesley* brig never floated again, and perhaps some of her oaken timbers are lying on that coral reef at Tonga to this day.

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CHAPTER XXV.

"Down came the stranger vessel
Unheeding on her way."—*Whittier.*

ABOUT a fortnight after leaving Vavau, the *Sylph* reached Tahiti, when Walter learned that his father was stationed at an island about two degrees to the eastward. Thither he proceeded in a small sloop, and met with a very loving reception from his father and his excellent step-mother, whom he had not seen for nearly ten years. The revivifying influence of that genial climate soon began to tell upon his weakened frame, and his native air proved far more beneficial than doctor's prescriptions In a few months his strength returned, and the horrible depression, which had so long kept his mind hovering over the grave, dispersed like mist in a valley when the sun pours down his meridian beams, and the world again seemed to him worth living in. The particulars of his seven months' sojourn among the Society Islands would make several chapters, and would doubtless be interesting to persons who have the cause of heathen missions at heart; but I must hasten on with my narrative, for some of my readers may be anxious to know how poor Kate was faring in the great metropolis of the world.

Walter thoroughly enjoyed his island life. He often regretted that his health had not permitted him, years before, to continue the studies necessary to qualify him

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for the mission field; for though there was not much in a missionary's every-day routine to arouse an enthusiasm such as is often displayed at valedictory meetings, it was a work in which he felt he could cheerfully devote his life's energies, if he had a wife who was equally earnest in the good cause. After taking a tender farewell of his beloved parents, he returned to Tahiti, and in a few days he embarked in the brig *Hornet*, which was bound to Sydney direct. He was the only passenger on board.

The ship had been about a week at sea, when Walter was one night aroused from his slumbers by an unusual noise overhead. He hastily dressed, and went on deck; but at first he could not see anything to warrant the bustle and excitement which was going on, and the captain and crew were too busy for him to ask them any questions just then. It was a fine moonlight night, and the sea was as smooth as glass, save for the long rolling swell which is always to be seen on the surface of the ocean. There was not a breath of wind, and the sails flapped lazily against the masts. After awhile, as the excitement and bustle did not decrease, Walter ventured to ask the captain if there was anything serious the matter.

"Matter, indeed! can't you see the reef yonder?"

Walter looked in the direction indicated, and thought he could discern something like a curl on the water upon which the moonbeams were flickering, and he heard a peculiar rumbling noise. If that was a reef, it did not appear very formidable to his inexperienced eyes. He was not alarmed, but walked the deck quite composedly, or stood and watched the crew in a boat ahead, who were trying to tow the vessel away from the reef. He soon saw, however, that they were nearing it, and he

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could hear the sullen roaring of the surf quite distinctly, and he began to realize the danger of it.

"Lay alongside with the boat!" shouted the captain; and then he said in an undertone to the mate, "It's no use wearing the men's strength out with towing; the current is setting right over the reef two knots an hour. It's all up with our poor old brig, I fear."

"Would not the anchors stop her, captain?" asked Walter in a deprecatory tone, as if conscious that he was asking a question on a professional matter of which he knew little or nothing.

"If you can find the bottom, I'll let go an anchor quick enough," replied the captain, testily. "These treacherous coral reefs run as straight up as the side of a church, and there is deep water close alongside of them. On to that reef we shall go in less than half an hour, unless a breeze should spring up. You had better go below and stow a few traps into your carpet bag, Mr. Thompson; and bear in mind we can't take much baggage, for we have only one boat for all hands. Steward! get some small stores and three bags of biscuits ready to put into the boat. Now, look alive, boys! hoist up a couple of casks of water from the fore hold and sling into the boat. Be smart, all of you; we've no time to spare!"

Walter went to his cabin in a state of trepidation, such as he had never before felt at sea. He hastily packed a few articles of clothing and the contents of his writing desk into a small portmanteau, and, taking his cloak over his arm, he re-ascended to the deck. It cost him a severe pang to leave behind him his books, and the large collection of island curiosities which his father and other friends had given to him, but there was no alternative. The stores and water were put into the boat, and then

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all hands left the ship. A few minutes afterward, she was rolling broadside on to the reef.

"Half an hour of that grinding work will make a thoroughfare through the old *Hornet's* bilges," muttered the captain, with a sorrowful look at his doomed vessel. "Well, we can't help it! Mortal man can't stay the ocean currents."

"We have done all we could do to save our ship, anyhow," said the chief mate, "and the crew have worked well at the oars."

"Yes, you have all done your duty. Now light your pipes, my lads; you'll have a long pull by-and-by. We will lie by her till daylight, if she floats so long."

I have before stated that Walter's experience of sea life was very limited; but he had often read tales of disasters and shipwreck at sea, and he used to think there was a lively excitement in the dangers, something like escaping from a bush fire, or galloping over a rough country in pursuit of bushrangers. But his shipwreck seemed to him a tame affair, with less excitement in it than there would be on board an excursion steamer, when stuck on a river mud-bank. Except regret at the loss of so many valuable effects, he felt but little personal concern at the mishap, which had left him with thirteen other men in an open boat, several hundreds of miles from any civilized land. The reef was an isolated coral patch, which rose up straight as a cliff through the blue waters, and was only dry at neap-tides; and after the brig went down, close beside the reef, not a vestige of her could be seen except some loose gear which floated off her deck. Like many other novices at sea, Walter could not estimate the dangers and risks of his position; but he was doomed soon to experience a few real hardships, which tested his newly-found strength to the

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utmost. Gently rocking in a boat on a smooth sea in the full moonlight, waiting to see the *Hornet* sink, while the crew were quietly smoking their pipes, was the only bit of romance which Walter could afterwards recall from his ten days and nights' weary cruising in the long-boat, exposed to a tropical sun, and often to fierce thunder-storms, and for twenty hours to the fury of a gale, which threatened every minute to engulf the frail craft and all on board. Nor were the perils of the sea all he had to dread; for three of the crew became mad through drinking to excess, from a keg of rum which was unluckily put into the boat, and the lives of all the other men were in peril from the fury of the wretched maniacs, one of whom jumped overboard. The other two were at length overpowered, and bound hands and feet. But their horrible imprecations, as they lay huddled in the fore part of the boat, were far more appalling to Walter than the hissing waves or the blue lightning.

One dark, squally night, Walter was coiled up in his usual place in the stern-sheets of the boat. Every article of his clothing was wet through, and his strength and spirits were almost exhausted. Suddenly he was aroused from an uneasy doze by the captain, who was steering, shouting out, "Ship ahoy! ship ahoy! Don't run over us! Port! port your helm."

Walter threw his wet cloak from off his head, just in time to see a lofty ship under a press of sail dash close past the boat. It had indeed almost run over them. The excitement was intense, as, notwithstanding the repeated shouting of all in the boat, the ship passed rapidly by, without apparently noticing them. Then, for a few minutes, despair seemed to have settled into each heart. Some of the men wept like children, others raved out oaths and curses, and one poor fellow was with difficulty

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restrained from throwing himself overboard, in an insane attempt to swim after the ship. The captain sighed heavily, and muttered to himself, as he thought of his wife and children in Sydney, "My poor Sally! I'm afraid you will have to struggle alone for bread for our young ones!"

During that terrible interval, Walter's mind was, for the first time in his life, oppressed with blasphemous thoughts of the wisdom and justice of God, the bare remembrance of which ever afterwards made him tremble Just as he was resolving that he would never again offer a prayer for Divine help, or believe in the merciful providence of God, a rocket was seen sparkling through the darkness, and then a blue light; and it was at once evident that the boat had been seen by the watch on board, and the signals indicated that the ship was hove to.

"Hurrah! hurrah!" shouted the poor weather-beaten men in the boat, as if with one voice. "Lower down the sails, and out with your oars, my bonnies!" cried the captain, with new life in his tone. That was the only cheerful sentence he had uttered since he left the wreck. Out went the oars, and the men put all their remaining strength into their stroke. Guided by the blue light, the boat was steered a straight course, and soon all hands were safely on board the barque *Water-witch*, bound to Lima.

The weary castaways were immediately supplied with dry clothing and warm food, and several of the ship's crew gave up their sleeping berths to their brother sailors in distress. Walter and the captain of the *Hornet* were entertained in the cabin, and the best fare on board was liberally provided for them. Never perhaps is kindness more willingly shown or more keenly appreciated, than

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under such disastrous circumstances. The sudden transition from his wretched plight in the long-boat, wet, hungry, heart-sick, and death seeming to gape at him with a thousand mouths in the rough waves, to the well-spread table in the comfortable cabin of the barque, was overpowering, and he could not express his gratitude with his tongue. But in his heart he acknowledged God's goodness and mercy, and he re-resolved that his spared life should be more than ever dedicated to his Almighty Helper. That rocket which shot upwards through the midnight darkness on the wide ocean seemed, in after-years, to hiss before his memory's vision, if he were in some gloomy season tempted to doubt the Divine promise of "help in trouble," and "grace for every time of need."

A few days afterwards a vessel was signalled, and it proved to be the *Janet* whaler, homeward bound to New Haven, America. As the provisions were running short on board the *Waterwitch*, it was resolved to transfer seven of the shipwrecked men to the whaler. Lots were drawn, and Walter was one of the party destined to go. He would have much preferred remaining on board the barque, and taking his chance of getting a passage from Lima to Sydney, rather than go round Cape Horn in a heavily-laden whaling ship; but there was no choice for him, not one of his former shipmates offered to go in his stead, so he had to put up with his lot; he was forthwith transhipped to the *Janet*, which soon sailed away on her course to the United States.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

"Work! work! work!
Till the brain begins to swim.
Work! work! work!
Till the eyes are heavy and dim.
Seam and gusset and band,
Band and gusset and seam,
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,
And sew them on in a dream."—*Hood.*

THE plans which Kate and Amy and Fred conjointly formed for earning the means of keeping their home intact, were sound enough as to their willingness to work, but they soon found that they had widely miscalculated their means of obtaining work with a living remuneration. Their good friend and pastor listened while they explained their plans, and he kindly encouraged them to hope for success. "It will be hard, indeed, if two active girls cannot earn twenty-five shillings a week," he sanguinely remarked to his wife, who was present and had quietly listened to the colloquy.

"We shall see, my dear," cautiously rejoined Mrs. Allman. She had had more experience with London workwomen than her worthy spouse; and though she did not like to say a word to discourage any one, she had misgivings that the girls would find it hard to earn even half as much per week as they had calculated. "We shall see," is a convenient phrase, which often has a doubtful meaning; but Mrs. Allman meant what she said, and as

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a practical evidence of it, she went out the next day with her husband, for the express purpose of getting work for Kate and Amy. A less earnest pair would have given up the task as hopeless, considering the number of fancy shops at which they received about the same answer: "Sorry to say we have no work to put out at present. We are full handed; and orders in our line are scarce now, for most ladies do their own fancywork." Mrs. Allman thought that light fancywork would suit the girls best, and be better paid for than plain sewing; but work of some kind they must have, and she bravely resolved to find it for them.

"I begin to think that it was almost wrong of us to encourage poor Kate to try to earn a livelihood with her needle, when it is clear from her testimonials that she is an efficient teacher," said Mr. Allman to his wife, as they walked along, after several ineffectual attempts to obtain work for the sisters at some of the West End shops. "I had no idea that work for needlewomen is so hard to be got, and that it is so poorly paid for."

"I knew something about it though, and that is why I was not quite so sanguine as you were when Kate first proposed it. You thought that she and Amy might easily earn twenty-five shillings a week, but I felt sure they could not earn anything like that sum, inexperienced as they are at shop work. It would certainly be unkind of us to advise Kate to begin at such an unpromising occupation, if it were practicable for her to take a situation as governess; but you remember, dear, she explained to us that she cannot go out as a teacher, on account of her afflicted father; so she must have some kind of work that she can do at home. I am not discouraged yet; we have only tried at shops where they

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give out fancywork. I dare say it is true enough that bazaars, in aid of charitable institutions, spoil the shopkeepers' trade to some extent. I would get fancywork for the girls if possible, for Kate has good taste, and I think that she, and Amy too, would take delight in it, and it would be nicer for them than plain needlework, and look less like drudgery."

"I should think there is more poetry in fancywork than in the plainer sort of stitchery," remarked Mr. Allman.

"I fear there is not much poetry or romance in any kind of shop work now-a-days, my dear; but we mustn't mind that. Let us go back to the City, and try at some of the respectable hosiers or shirtmakers."

Back they went forthwith, and applied at several of the City shops; but the prices that were offered for plain work were so low, that Mrs. Allman knew it would be discouraging to the girls to mention them. At length they went into a rather unpretending-looking shop in Aldgate, where the goods in the window seemed to be of better quality than ordinary. After some persuasive negotiation with the shopkeeper, Mrs. Allman's perseverance was rewarded by his agreeing to give shirt work to the young women for a month, to see what they could do; and he thought he might be able to give them constant work after awhile.

"Do you understand shirtmaking, Kate?" asked Mrs. Allman, soon after she had seated herself in Kate's little parlour, after her wearisome canvass among the London workshops.

"I know a little about it, ma'am. I have sometimes helped my poor mother to make shirts for father and the boys."

"I have no doubt you can do it excellently. Now,

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I have the promise of as much work as Amy and you can do for a month; and if your sewing is approved of, I think you may count upon permanent employment. It will be straightforward work, you know, for the material will be all ready cut out."

"I'm sure we are very grateful to you, ma'am."

"Yes, my dears, I understand all that," kindly interrupted Mrs. Allman. "Let me further explain. The work is for a respectable shop in the City. Do you know Aldgate?"

"No; but I can find it," said Kate.

"Never mind, dear; I will arrange in some way for the work to be brought to you, and Fred can carry it back when it is finished. I should not like you to go into the City alone on such an errand. Mr. Grace has promised to pay you ninepence a shirt, which he says is more than he usually pays. He looks a kind man. I cannot estimate what you will earn at shirtmaking, but we shall soon see. At any rate, you can try it for a month, and perhaps in the meantime something more profitable may turn up."

The poor girls were overjoyed at the prospect of having work which they could do; but when Fred came home to tea, and they began to discuss the subject with him, the dismal idea that they could not make a living by it, again beclouded all their hopes of an honest independence.

"You would have to make thirty-four shirts in a week to earn twenty-five shillings," urged Fred; and he produced his figures to show that there was no mistake about it. "You can't make so many, I am sure."

"Oh dear no! that is impossible," responded Kate, with a sigh. "There is a good deal of work in a fine shirt."

"Come, come, Amy darling! don't cry about it. I am

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sorry I said anything to upset you. None of us know what we can do until we try, as I have said before. If you cannot make thirty-four shirts in a week, make as many as you can. We shall manage to live, never fear. I have agreed to put up Clover the grocer's shutters every night for a shilling a week, and I am on the look out for other odd jobs, that will be sure to drop in my way by-and-by. There now, that's right, 'smile again, my bonnie lassie!'" Fred added merrily; and he kissed tender-souled Amy, till the gathering shadows of despondency flitted from her pretty dimpled face.

About noon the next day a carrier's cart stopped at the door, and left a large parcel from Mr. Grace, which contained the materials for a dozen fine longcloth shirts, with linen breasts, collars and cuffs.

"There will be no trouble with cutting out, Amy, and that is what I was most in doubt of," said Kate, after examining the contents of the parcel with some degree of trepidation. "I am sure we can do the sewing part satisfactorily. Get your thimble, dear, and you can begin hemming the bottom of this shirt. I must make a stew for dinner, and then I will come up and we will work away and sing or chat to dear father at the same time. I am so glad the parcel has come. I was beginning to fear that Mr. Grace had forgotten all about it. Now run upstairs, love; and mind you keep the work very clean."

On the following morning, Mrs. Allman called to see how the girls were getting on in their new occupation. She found them diligently at work in the room where their sick father was lying in bed. They showed her one shirt, which they had worked till past midnight to finish.

"That will never do, my girls. If you work so late at night, you will be ruined in candles, and worse than all, you will seriously injure your eyes. Oh dear me! you

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cannot afford to put such work as this in a shirt for ninepence!" she added, after closely examining the one they had completed. "This will never pay at the price."

"We have taken all the pains we possibly could, ma'am."

"Yes, indeed you have, Kate. Well, it is quite right and proper to do so at all times, and I must not blame you for well-doing. I wish all the workpeople of this great nation, and all the manufacturers also, would follow your example. I must see whether Mr. Grace will appreciate such honest work. He ought to be willing to pay a fair living price for it. Surely no man who is worthy to wear a shirt would object to give a tradesman a shilling extra for one with such neat work in the breast and collar! Wrap up this shirt for me, Kate; I am going into the City, so I will call and show it to Mr. Grace, and hear what he says about it."

Mr. Grace was a reasonable man. He listened patiently to Mrs. Allman's arguments, and admitted that the sample of Kate's work was very satisfactory. "Such work as this is honestly worth eighteen shillings a dozen, ma'am, I confess; but I cannot afford to pay so much, for competition in our line is very sharp, and profits are brought down to a minimum. I quite agree with you, that it is not right to encourage young girls to do work in a slovenly way, by paying them too little for what they do; but how can I help it?" Mr. Grace paused, as if for an answer, so Mrs. Allman said,—

"I think if I kept a clothes shop, I would try to make it pay by selling honestly-made articles at fair and reasonable prices, and I would pay my workpeople accordingly. I feel morally certain that such a course of dealing would be successful in the long run; indeed, no other course of dealing could be really profitable."

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Mr. Grace gave his head a lugubrious shake, and then replied, "I should be sorry to deny the correctness of your position, ma'am; still, if I allow my keen cutting neighbours opposite to undersell me, I must soon shut up shop. I can assure you that they get white shirts made for five and sixpence a dozen, and coarse coloured shirts, for working men, as low as three and ninepence a dozen. Some of my customers can see that my goods are better made, and that the buttons are securely sewed on, but they are not all so discerning, and as a rule the public will go to the shops that sell at the lowest prices, although the apparent cheapness is in most cases a delusion and a cheat. If those young women continue to make up goods for me equal to this one, I will pay them one shilling a shirt; but I cannot afford to pay more; indeed, it is only as a favour to you, ma'am, that I go so far beyond the usual trade price."

Mrs. Allman thanked him for his consideration; and then she ventured to say, "I think, Mr. Grace, that shirts which are made up for labouring men should be of extra strength and durability, considering the hard work which labourers have to do, and the smallness of their means, as a rule. Now I cannot imagine that shirts can possibly be made up even moderately well for three shillings and ninepence a dozen."

"No, ma'am; they are not expected to be made up well: they are merely intended to be sold cheap, as an attraction to customers to buy other goods, which pay better profits."

"If I were a tradesman, I would not sell such cheap goods on any account."

"Then you would soon have to close your shop, for your unscrupulous competitors would take all your trade away."

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"They might take all the trade they could cozen from me by such despicable means. I have faith enough in righteous dealing to believe that I should prosper in my way; but if I were obliged to close my shop, I should have the consciousness that I was not a party to dishonest tricks of trade, which will sooner or later bring disgrace and ruin to any trading community." A customer just then came into the shop, and put an end to the argument, so Mrs. Allman bade Mr. Grace good day, and went homeward, rather fearful that she had jeopardised the interests of Kate and Amy by speaking her mind too freely in condemnation of cheap wares.

When she reached home, Mr. Allman commended her bold stand against trade trickery, which he said was a growing sin of England as a commercial nation; and he added, "I will preach on this very subject, after I have carefully prepared a sermon."

"Yes, do, my dear, and print fifty thousand copies; I am sure they will do good."

Mr. Allman was amused at his good wife's simple earnestness, and he smilingly asked, "Who would buy my sermons? The printing I fear would not pay; but I will preach a sermon on *trade trickery and adulteration*, and I shall thus be raising my protest against a roguish system, which I sadly believe is eating out the vitals of English commerce."

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CHAPTER XXVII.

"Sweet is the pleasure after pain."—*Dryden.*

"NOW, Amy dear! take another look at the buttons, and be sure that they are all right, while I finish off this collar," said Kate to her sister, at the close of their first week's work. They had finished only four shirts, which Fred was going to take to the shop after tea. But they agreed not to estimate their future earnings by that result, for they had not wrought the whole week, and they had many hindrances. The next week's work would be a fair criterion of their capabilities, for they meant to rise very early each morning and get all their house work done, and be ready to begin to sew immediately after breakfast.

"Heigho!" sighed Kate, as she stitched away at the last collar. "Sewing is wearisome work, though some folks do not think so, because a needle is not so heavy as a quarryman's crowbar." And then she began to consider if it were feasible for some philanthropic heart to devise a plan whereby needlewomen could be more liberally paid for their labour. She felt sure that very few men would hesitate a moment to pay a trifle extra for a shirt, or any other article of clothing, if they knew that it would go directly into the poor, ill-paid workwoman's pocket. Not any man that she had met with in her travels, she thought, would refuse such a reasonable boon: even the poor convict men on Mr. Wilton's estate would not begrudge it if they had money of their

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own. That train of cogitation naturally led her to think of Walter Thompson; and she fancied it was barely possible that the shirt she was then finishing so neatly might find its way to his wardrobe. She was sure that he would cheerfully give a shilling extra for a shirt, to save any poor work-girl from slavery and semi-starvation; but what would he not give to help *her* if he knew that she needed it? The last thought brought tears into her eyes, but she was very careful that they did not fall on her work. Many unlucky seamstresses have been scolded for soiling their work in that way.

When Fred had started into the City with the four shirts, Kate and Amy began to put their little home in order for the Sabbath; and when that bustling work was over, and they sat down to rest a bit, Kate remarked, "Our week's work is done now, Amy, and to-morrow is Sunday—'pearl of days,' as dear Emma Wilton used to sing. Now we must both try our utmost to avoid worrying about next week's work, until Monday morning; and we must not allow any domestic cares to mar our enjoyment of the blessed day of rest—'By God to mortals given.'"

But poor Kate was imperatively laying down a law which she found it very difficult to keep; and when the next morning dawned upon her waking senses, some of her week-day cares lay heavily on her mind, and despite all her philosophy they would stay there. Many older heads than hers have been equally at fault, and "thought for the morrow" has marred the appreciation of numberless eloquent sermons. Kate had no doubts or misgivings about God's providential care, when her poor blind father said to her and Amy on that Sunday morning, "Ye are of more value than many sparrows;" but before she got half-way to church, her heart was again

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sorely troubled, because on the previous night she had been obliged to break into a small reserve fund, in consequence of Mr. Grace not paying Fred for the shirts he took to the shop. Such is life! Anxiety will at times overcome the best of us.

Throughout the ensuing week, Kate and Amy worked ten hours each day except Saturday, when they managed to finish at six o'clock, that they might have the evening for tidying up their house. They completed the eight shirts; and when Fred took them to the shop, Mr. Grace paid him twelve shillings, the stipulated price for the dozen; and he also gave him material for a dozen more. After Fred's return home, they all went into a quiet calculation of ways and means. The discussion took place in the parlour downstairs, so that their father might not hear it, for there was nothing cheering in it. Kate and Amy declared that they had worked as hard as they could with their lack of experience, and the result of their joint earnings for the week, after deducting eighteen pence for extra candles and for cotton and needles, was six shillings and sixpence. Without any argument at all, it was decided that shirtmaking would not support their present style of living; and the parish church clock struck the hour of midnight, while they were gloomily pondering what they could do to keep a roof over their heads, and get necessary comforts for their father, and bread enough for themselves.

"It is Sunday morning now," said Fred, rising from his seat; "so I propose to adjourn this lively meeting until Monday at sunrise." He then kissed his sisters, and they retired to rest.

"Fear not, little flock," was the text of the Rev. W. Allman's sermon the next morning. It seemed as if it

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were specially made for a distressed family; but poor weary Kate could not just then realize the consolation it offered, any more than an artist could take a sun picture on a foggy evening. The anxiety and overwork of the past week induced forebodings of worry and grim want for next week, and temporarily beclouded faith, hope, and every other support,—in short, she was miserably depressed by the dead weight of incipient dyspepsia. Happy for you, dear reader, if you are ignorant of what that means.

That shirtmaking would not yield pay enough to support their present comfortable style of living, was a conclusion which Kate and Amy could not help forming, for it was grimly demonstrated by the result of a fortnight's work; so they decided that they would reduce their household expenses in every possible way. The rent was seven shillings a week; and their landlord's agent called for it once a month. That money must always be ready, for he was not a man who would patiently listen to excuses, however plausibly they might be framed. It was his business to collect rents; and when he was about his business he looked as hard as an iron post. His well-known rattle at the door had made Amy tremble ever since she saw him distrain on the chattels of their next-door neighbour; and Fred was as shy of him as he was of Clover the grocer's mastiff, which was chained up close to the corner where the shop shutters were stacked. The rent *must* always be paid. Father *must* have sago and milk, and other little delicacies that he could eat, and Fred *must* have meat for his dinner every day. Kate and Amy agreed that those were inevitable demands; but for their own living they would "make shift," though father and Fred were not to know what shifts they made.

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It would be a dreary disclosure were I to give even a mere outline of the experience of the two girls for the ensuing twelve months. It was indeed a trying time; and if their poor father had not been blind, it would have grieved him sorely to see the havoc which excessive work and insufficient food were making on the health of his once blooming daughters—of Kate especially, for she was of a more anxious temperament than her sister. Time after time she resolved, before sitting down to her sewing in the morning, that she would not encourage fretful thoughts throughout the day, as she had done on the previous day; but before she had been at work half an hour, her mind would be absent from every subject but her own hard lot. There she would sit and stitch, and conjure up dismal pictures of the interior of Poplar Workhouse, with her dear father lying on a pauper's bed, and herself and Amy in another part of the building, in close companionship with many other children of suffering and poverty.

Fred had received an advance of five shillings a week to his wages, which made him feel like an independent man; but notwithstanding that acceptable help, Kate was under the necessity of borrowing small sums at various times from the broker who furnished her house. The man said it was against his rules to advance money to any one without having security in his hands, but he would oblige Kate with the little she wanted, and simply take a bill of sale over her chattels, and she could still retain them. That seemed an easy way of meeting present difficulties, and Kate gladly availed herself of it.

Though Mr. Maysen's sufferings were great, and his seasons of respite from intense paroxysms were becoming less frequent, he was always patient; and his cheerful

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conversation helped to lighten the toil of his busy daughters. Mr. and Mrs. Allman often visited the sick man, and the latter never came without the little brown basket which was so well known to all the poor folks in the parish, for there was always something nice in it, and it was offered in a loving way, which made the gift doubly acceptable to the grateful recipients. It would indeed have been a boon and a grand investment, if some wealthy neighbour had given Mrs. Allman the means for charging her basket more liberally, on her frequent visits to the sick and the afflicted, for her bounty was necessarily restricted to the savings from her own limited income.

One kind-hearted gentleman in Sydney, whom I know, keeps his minister regularly supplied with pocket-money to relieve cases of distress where immediate relief is necessary. "Blessings on his considerate head!" have prayed many poor bed-ridden ones whom his bounty has reached. There is scope for more charity of that practical kind, and the city missionaries of Sydney and elsewhere might be wisely entrusted to invest a few pounds a week for any lady or gentleman who has the benevolent desire to lessen existing misery amongst poor creatures who are unable to help themselves, or to make their wants known to the world.

Fresh anxieties soon began to further depress Kate's already overladen heart. She could not but notice that her father's life was fast ebbing away, and his emaciated frame showed the rapid development of an internal injury, which he received at the blowing up of the *Cricket*. Often had she watched the smile on his features as she sat beside him at her work and chatted about her pleasant Australian home, and the loving friends in it; and of the bright-plumaged birds in the

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bush, and the evergreen trees, and the genial climate, and other characteristics of the far-off land of fruits and flowers, which made poor hungry Amy sigh to be there, to feast upon the peaches and the new milk, and the wild honey and other nice things, which were so wondrously cheap and plentiful. But now constant agony chased all smiles from his face, and the doctor, whom Kate gently insisted on calling in, bade her prepare for the end, for her father was beyond the reach of human skill. Her sewing was at once put aside, and her whole time was occupied in doing all she could to comfort him. At length death mercifully put an end to his sufferings, and his liberated soul soared away to the home that he had so often talked of with a sort of foretaste of its peace and joy. He died with a blessing on his lips for his beloved children, who stood around his bed sorrowing deeply.

The fashion of wearing mourning apparel is a woful tax upon poor families, and it sometimes involves semi-starvation for many months. Kate knew her late father's sensible ideas on that old custom of society, and in her conscience she felt that it would not be dishonouring his memory, if she dispensed with crape and other expensive mourning material altogether; but Fred and Harry were not so practical in their views, and Amy sided with them. They urged that it would be noticed by all the gossips in the parish if they did not go into deep mourning; so Kate yielded to their wishes, and a further advance was obtained from the broker, to the full extent of his valuation of their household furniture.

Funeral garments are usually wanted immediately, and that forms one of the strongest pleas for the dearness of them; but tailors and dressmakers not unfrequently take advantage of the unwillingness of

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their sorrowful customers to cavil at charges; indeed, it would be thought by some bereaved ones to be highly indecorous to haggle over the price of a frock which was deeply trimmed with crape, or to question the charge for a black coat, which was specially made to honour the memory of a near and dear relative. Who would ever think of doing such a thing if he had his heart filled with real grief? And what undertaker was ever shocked by an attempt to abate his bill of costs for his melancholy services? It is almost a sin or a sacrilege to imagine such a thing. Doctors may be made to wait for their fees, and in some instances not much scruple is felt if they are never paid, however eagerly their professional services were sought for in times of emergency; but undertakers' accounts are usually paid promptly, and no discount demanded. I do not remember ever hearing of an undertaker being put to the trouble of suing for his bill—indeed, such a thing would be considered a family disgrace, to avert which no sacrifice would be considered too great. I would not deprecate prompt payments—far from it; but I see no reason why a doctor, or even a baker or a grocer, should not be paid as promptly as an undertaker.

It may reasonably be asked, "How was it that Mr. Maysen, a clever mechanic, in constant work, should not have made some provision for contingencies, which every family man is subject to?" I will try to explain his shortcomings, though I don't wish to excuse them. Forty years ago the facilities were not so great as they are now for a working man to provide out of his earnings for remote times of need. The means of investing small sums by way of deferred annuities, endowments for children, life assurance, building societies, and other similar useful institutions, were comparatively unknown,

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or they were not much understood or appreciated by the working classes; and perhaps accident insurance societies were not then in existence. An excellent friend of mine, one of the largest manufacturers in Australia, has a sick fund for his numerous workmen, each one of whom is expected to pay a small sum weekly from his wages. I believe it is only a penny or two a week. There was no such simple expedient adopted by the firm that Mr. Maysen worked for, though they were not inconsiderate or illiberal men; as a proof of which I may mention, that soon after the accident befel Mr. Maysen and his family, a member of the firm called at the hospital, and gave a cheque to pay for the funeral expenses of Mrs. Maysen and her little daughter.

Mr. Maysen, I repeat, was an industrious man, of strictly temperate habits, and not given to extravagance in any way; moreover, he earned pretty good wages, and yet he never managed to save anything—had perhaps never even thought of providing a little reserve fund, for sickness or accidents. Anomalous as that may seem, an ordinary observer has only to look around him to find similar cases of peculiar want of thrift even in these days of penny savings banks, and mutual provident societies. No doubt Mr. Maysen, as he lay on his sick bed, sometimes regretted that he had not been more saving in the days of his health, and wished perhaps that he had not spent so much money on expensive books and scientific magazines; but at the same time, it must have been a consolation to him to reflect that he had never wasted any money by idle or intemperate habits. He was fond of study, and there were no Mechanics' Institutes' free libraries for him to get books from, as he might do if he were living to-day.

Soon after Mr. Maysen's death, his late employers

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very considerately sent a cheque for the funeral expenses; but to pay for extra mourning and other items, Kate had to pawn her watch and sundry articles of jewellery, which had been given to her by her parents, and other valued friends. It grieved her very much to have recourse to such a humiliating expedient, but there was no help for it—she would rather do that than borrow money from friends; and as neither of her brothers could be persuaded to go to the pawn shop, she had to go herself. It was no wonder that the pawnbroker eyed Kate as suspiciously as a detective officer would do, for she trembled like a thief when she placed her trinkets on the counter, and timidly asked him to lend her ten pounds on them.

During her father's last days, and also while the funeral preparations were going on in the house, Kate's was the directing mind, and she seemed to have a more than ordinary share of energy and strength. But after the customary visits of condolence of friends and neighbours had been paid, and she settled down again to her sewing work, a reaction began, and she was depressed beyond all her former experience. As a climax to her distress, about three weeks after her father's burial, she received a note from the furniture broker, stating, in the usual formal style, that he had a heavy bill to meet soon, and he should expect her to be ready on that day week to repay the money he had advanced to her, and the interest also. Kate's needlework fell from her lap as she read the note, and she burst into a hysterical fit of weeping, which alarmed poor Amy and made her weep too.

"It is no use trying to keep our house any longer Amy; all our things will be taken away, and then what shall we do?" sobbed Kate, while her poor worn face

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looked the image of despair. Her nerves were unstrung, from long-continued worry, and she could not bear up against this fresh trouble, though it was not unexpected. Positive ruin seemed to be crackling all around her like a bush fire. "I must send an answer to this note; what shall I say, Amy?" But Amy was not a good one to give advice in such an exigency, for she was wholly inexperienced in financial matters: she could only sob in reply to Kate's excited question, and there were the two girls in a pitiable state of dejection when Fred came home to tea.

"Poor father's words about the ill luck of borrowing money are coming true in our case, sure enough," was Fred's remark when he learned the cause of his sister's excitement. "But there is no use in fretting so much about it, Katie. Give me a cup of tea, and then I'll go and try if I can persuade the broker to have patience with us. His money is safe, but he must wait a bit for it."

"Oh, I don't think he will wait, Fred; and I fear it is useless for you to ask him."

"Perhaps he doesn't know we have had so much trouble lately; but I'll tell him all about it."

"I am afraid that won't influence him much, Fred. Just read what his note says; and you know he has a bill of sale over all our furniture," urged Kate despondingly.

"Well, the worst he can do is to take our furniture. He mustn't take you, Kate, nor you, Amy; so don't be afraid of him."

"But what shall we do, dear, if he takes away our furniture?"

Fred looked rather posed for a minute, and then he said boldly, "I can't tell you just now what we shall do,

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but I don't believe we shall be starved. Almost our dear father's last words were, 'I am sure God will provide for my orphan children.'"

"Yes, I remember his words, dear. I don't think we shall really come to want; and perhaps if I were a little stronger, I should not be so distressed at this trouble which now threatens us." Poor Kate buried her face in her hands and wept again.

"Now I tell you what it is, Katie; come what may, you and Amy shall not work at that miserable shirt stitchery any longer, for it is wearing you both into skinny old women. Harry and I made up our minds to that when he was here last. I mean to tell Mr. Grace very civilly on Saturday night, that you are not able to work for him any longer. Hallo! who is coming now?" added Fred, sternly, for at that moment there was a sharp rapping at their front door. "If that griping old broker has come for our furniture to-night, I'll knock him down."

Amy ran to open the door, lest her valiant brother should fight the broker, if he were there; but instead of their dreaded creditor, it was their good friend the Rev. Mr. Allman. He could not but notice that Kate and Amy had been weeping, and he kindly asked if they had any fresh trouble.

Kate had always been diffident of trespassing too much on Mr. Allman's kindness, and she had not told him of her pecuniary straits. He saw her embarrassment, and remarked, "You need not explain anything to me just now, my dear. Pardon my intrusion at this rather unseasonable hour, but a gentleman has just called at the parsonage to inquire for your address. Mrs. Allman suggested that it would be better for me to ask you beforehand if you know him, so she is talking to him

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in our drawing-room while I ran over here. He looks a respectable man, but we cannot always judge of a man's character by his good looks. He says he came from Australia, and his name is Thompson. Here is his card. Do you know a person of that name, Kate?"

Kate's face was flushed with weeping, but in an instant it turned pale, and then it was flushed again, and it was with extreme difficulty that she could make her tongue say, "Oh, yes, sir, I know him. He is a very dear friend."

"Just so—I am glad to hear it; then you shall see him very soon. Try to compose yourself, my girl, while I go and fetch your friend. He seems very impatient to see you."

Half an hour afterwards, Walter Thompson was in the midst of the astonished group, holding Kate in his arms. She had swooned with joyous emotion at the unexpected sight of her lover.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

"I've wandered east, I've wandered west, through many a weary way,
But never, never can forget the love of life's young day."
—*Motherwell.*

IT is a pretty general belief that story-tellers make their heroes pop up or down when and where they please, without regard to facts or feasibility. It is quite possible to do it, I grant; but any one who is even moderately observant of passing events must own that stranger things sometimes occur in the experience of living people around, than the imagination of a novelist could conjure up. Walter Thompson found his way to Kate's house at a very opportune season, and I will now explain how it came about.

We left him in the *Janet* whaler, sailing away with a fair wind for the United States. He had a stormy passage round Cape Horn; and though he met with much kindness from the master and officers of the *Janet*, the best accommodation they could give him was not much nicer than a lodging-place in a tallow-chandler's cellar. It was a dreary lot; but Walter was not one to make present circumstances worse by grumbling at them. It is recorded that King Solomon, when he was asked by an Eastern prince for a sentiment which, inscribed on his ring, might cheer him under misfortune or temper his joy in seasons of prosperity, gave this motto, "*This also*

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shall pass away." Rough and greasy as was the small space between decks amongst the oil casks, where Walter and four of his shipwrecked companions were berthed, it was far safer than their closer quarters in the *Hornet's* long-boat; and cold and comfortless as his condition was, Walter could remember when it was much worse with him, and his hope was encouraged in the midst of present discomfort by the recollection of Solomon's motto, "This also shall pass away."

It did pass away. In ten weeks the *Janet* arrived at Newhaven, United States. Walter had taken the precaution before leaving Sydney to get a circular letter of credit from his banker. He did not expect to negotiate his letter of credit in any of the South Sea Islands, but he argued that he might find it handy before he had finished his holiday cruise, and the sequel proved that he was right. Without money or credit, Walter would, even in the United States of America, have been in an embarrassing position; but with his banker's letter in his pocket, he felt as cool and collected as a professional diver, or as a bather in a cork jacket. He soon provided himself with a new outfit, and then started for New York. Before he had seen half the attractive sights of that great city, he determined to cross the Atlantic and see the metropolis of the world. What could be more feasible than that plan? What is more likely than that such an idea should enter the head of a spirited young man, especially as there dwelt in London the girl whose beloved image was ever before his longing fancy? He did not know Kate's address, but he had often heard her speak of her good pastor at Poplar; so immediately after he landed from the Atlantic steamer at Liverpool, he took the train for London, and made his way direct to the parsonage, and from thence by

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an easy stage to his darling Kate's loving arms. Facts or fiction, what could be more natural than all that?—the latter part of it especially.

Kate's fainting fit soon passed away, and she became fully conscious that she was in the embrace of the man of her heart's first and only choice. No doubt it was pleasing; but she knew it was not maidenly to permit it, although there were so many smiling friends around; so she gently disengaged herself from Walter's arms, and sat down beside him. Mr. Allman considerately took his departure when he saw that Kate's senses had returned; about the same time brother Harry came in to stay for the evening, and then there was a sort of family introduction, but not at all a formal one, for Walter had often heard Kate speak of her brothers and sister, and they had often heard her speak of Walter's kindness to her, so they shook hands all round very heartily, and Walter almost kissed Amy as well as Kate in the excitement of the time. If he had done so, Amy might not have been much shocked at his mistake, though it would certainly have been a new experience to her.

"I hope you will all excuse me for speaking of anything so prosy as victuals at this interesting season," said Fred, who perceived that Kate and her lover were more disposed to talk about absent friends than to think of the wants of friends there present. "The plain fact is, I want my tea. I have been working at the vice all the afternoon, and that has sharpened my appetite. Go and make the kettle boil again, Amy, while I run round to the baker's for some muffins. 'Nature abhors a vacuum.' That is an axiom in natural philosophy, isn't it, Harry?"

Sensitive Harry looked somewhat abashed at his

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brother's hungry appeal; nevertheless, he admitted that he would like a cup of tea, for he had walked all the way from Christ Church School, and had not eaten anything since dinner time.

It was a pleasant tea meeting, for Walter, in his sensible style, which ignored absurd exaggerations, gave an outline of his adventures on sea and on land since he left Australia. The boys were intensely interested, especially with the particulars of the shipwreck, and of Walter's peril in the long-boat, and his privations in the oily *Janet;* and their exclamations at times showed more force than poetry. Amy sat and listened without saying a word, but her frequent sighs evidenced that she sympathised with Walter's perilous trials; while Kate's eyes were often overflowing with tears of gratitude to God for saving her lover's life, and for sparing her heavily-laden heart the additional pang of mourning for his untimely end.

If the vitality of Walter's love had depended solely upon Kate's external graces, it is likely that the altered appearance of her faded face and attenuated figure, when she lay helpless in his arms, would have extinguished the spark, like a lantern dropped down a well; for hard work and poor fare, and anxious watching for many months in a close room with her sick father, had taken all the bloom from her cheeks, and some of the graceful curves from her once symmetrical figure. But Walter's affection was of a more manly character, and was not dependent for a precarious existence on the fitful attractions of beauty. It was of the kind

> "Which lives when that exterior grace
> Which first inspired the flame decays."

I daresay her pretty face had in the first instance helped

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his discernment of the sterling qualities of her mind—that is natural enough; but it was her mental endowments and her amiability of disposition that his love was grafted upon; and pale and worn as she was, she was his darling Kate, and he still loved her with all the ardour of his tropical nature.

Some men's love would hardly stand the test of poverty—indeed, love has often been known to take its flight with a reverse of fortune. Kate, when the respected governess in Mr. Wilton's household, might have seemed a worthier object of attention than when in her poor little home at Poplar; but Walter's love was true, so it was not chilled by the evidences of poverty, which could hardly escape his observation; and altered as were her circumstances, there was no change in the gentlemanly deference which he had always shown to her, and her brothers were highly pleased to see their sister treated as a lady. Their pleasant re-union did not break up till a late hour; and when Walter bade them all good-night, he promised to come and see them again soon.

If Walter had allowed his heart to govern him, he would have asked Kate to marry him without delay; but he wisely thought that she would not like her wedding to take place so soon after her father's funeral, so he did not even hint it to her. But he opened his mind to Mr. and Mrs. Allman, and they kindly offered to assist him in every way they could. At their recommendation, he went to lodge with a respectable family in their parish, and he was a frequent visitor at the parsonage.

A few days afterwards, Kate received a very civil note from the broker, stating that he could manage to meet his heavy bill without troubling her to repay the money

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she owed him. A load was removed from Kate's mind at once, and she and Amy were rejoicing at the unexpected forbearance of the broker, when Mrs. Allman called to pay one of her maternal visits. After telling Kate that Walter had been to the parsonage several times, and saying a good many complimentary things about him, she added,—

"Mr. Allman and I have been talking your affairs over between ourselves, Kate, and we think that it is absolutely necessary for your health's sake that you give up sewing work for a time."

"My brothers have lately urged me to give it up, ma'am, and I have promised to do so. I am going to ask you and Mr. Allman if you will kindly try to find me a situation as governess in a school, where Amy could go as a pupil."

"Now listen to me a minute, Kate, and you shall hear of something to your advantage, as the newspaper advertisements sometimes say. You must give up needlework, or you will soon have to go into a hospital. Mr. Allman has lately received some money that he did not expect, and he has commissioned me to offer you a loan of ten pounds, to pay your housekeeping expenses while you are taking a rest—nay, nay, wait a bit before you speak! Here is the money; put it into your pocket, and mind you don't get your pocket picked, as a lady friend of mine did at a railway station the other day. Mr. Allman and I further think, Kate, that as your lover is quite a stranger in this country, you and Amy might do him the kindness to show him some of the sights of London. I think we can manage to get Fred a few days' holiday from the factory, and Harry from his school, and they can go with you. The little recreation will do you all good,—in short, it is what you really

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want, Kate,—so let it be settled at once, and I will tell Mr. Thompson. He is coming to dine with us to-day."

How could Kate object to such a pleasing proposal, made in such a kind, considerate way? Of course she warmly thanked her good friend Mrs. Allman, who went home highly pleased with the success of the little arrangement of which I need not explain that Walter had been the originator. When Fred came home to dinner, the good news he heard almost took away his appetite, and Amy was overjoyed at the prospect of holidays out of doors. That evening Walter came to tea, and then the programme of their excursions for the ensuing week was made, the anticipation of which brought a glow again into Kate's thin face, and made Amy look as brisk and chirpy as a bird escaping from a brick trap.

It was indeed a pleasant week for them all—such a holiday treat as they had never before enjoyed. They saw many of the sights that were thought most worthy of being seen in wealthy London, and visited some of the public gardens and parks in the environs. A second and a third week were spent in similar agreeable recreation (but Fred and Harry could not go with them), and the improvement in the appearance of the two girls was declared by their good friends, Mr. and Mrs. Allman, to be almost wonderful, and their spirits were improved in a corresponding degree; indeed, Amy got really sparkling at times, and in one of her exuberant moments she said, "If I were a rich lady, I would give every poor seamstress in London a month's holiday and plenty of pocket-money." That was an unusually strong speech for Amy, and it made her brothers laugh; but Walter patted her blushing cheek lovingly, and said, "Well

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done, Amy! that is a noble sentiment. Perhaps I may see you a rich lady some day; who knows?"

One lovely autumn morning—Harry and Fred having got leave of absence for the day—the whole family and Walter crossed the Thames in a ferry boat, and went for a picnic in Greenwich Park. Some of my readers can perhaps recall pleasant days spent in that favourite resort of dusty Londoners. I can remember some merry days spent there, and also some nice fun in riding donkey races on Blackheath. But fifty years' wear and tear of active life strangely alters one's tastes, especially in reference to physical exercises, and I should not see much fun to-day in racing on a donkey, neither should I feel much exhilaration from a roll down one of the grassy knolls in Greenwich Park.

While the boys and Amy were enjoying a run up and down Flamstead House Hill, Kate and Walter kept charge of the picnic basket beneath the shade of an oak tree; and there Walter pressed her to name an early day for their espousals. It would be presumptuous of me even to imagine all she said on the delicate subject, or all that he said in answer to her scruples. No doubt there was some good reasoning on both sides, but it is sufficient for me to record, that before they left the park, the happy day was fixed. The interesting fact was disclosed to brothers and sister that evening, as they all sat around the tea-table; upon which Fred and Harry simultaneously shouted "Hurrah!" and Amy clapped her little hands and then burst into tears, because she said her heart was overfull of joy.

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CHAPTER XXIX.

"A wife is a gift bestowed upon a man to reconcile him to the loss of paradise."—*Goethe.*

A FORTNIGHT afterwards, Walter and Kate were married in Mr. Allman's church. Fred was best man, as it is called, in virtue of his seniority; but Harry declared that he was not second best to any man living in his love for Kate; which bold assertion of a schoolboy made all the family laugh merrily. Amy was chief bridesmaid, and she looked very pretty in her new white frock, with appropriate trimmings, and flowers in her hair. It would not be possible to describe Kate's wedding costume from an imaginary point of view, so I will merely say that she was dressed with good taste, and she looked charming. Walter, of course, was becomingly attired for the auspicious occasion, and so were the boys; for Harry had doffed his antique school garb for the day, much to his satisfaction. It was a sunny morning, and the birds and flowers were all alive, and everything seemed to be singing or smiling on Kate's happy nuptials, as if they wished her joy and prosperity.

After the solemn ceremony, the bridal party went to the parsonage to breakfast, and a joyous gathering it was. In addition to the family, there were a few nice lively friends, whom Mrs. Allman had invited. No doubt Walter had carefully prepared his wedding speech beforehand, for most young bridegrooms are know-

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ing enough for that; but he managed so cleverly that it sounded just like a spontaneous utterance, fresh from his heart, and nobody could tell that it was a learnt-off speech, save perhaps Mr. Allman, who understood all about the pomps and vanities of human nature, in that particular way. Kate felt a new pride in her breast while Walter was speaking, with such manly assurance, and it was almost overpowering to her fluttering little heart; but when Mrs. Allman smilingly said to her, as Walter sat down, "Why, Mrs. Thompson, your good husband is quite an orator!" Kate's happy tears began to start, which was very natural to a girl in her position; she felt so funny at being called Mrs. Thompson, and so delighted that she had a good husband close beside her.

The time spent at a wedding breakfast, in actual gustatory operations, usually bears but a small proportion to the time expended in preparations for the feast. It may possibly be a matter of regret to some guests, that, in rising from a sumptuous repast, so many good things must be left behind; but it is not often that the newly-married pair care to linger too long over the dainties on the table, or to hear too many complimentary speeches and seasonable jokes. Usually they are glad to be off to a quieter region. Thus it was with Walter and Kate—they were pleased when it was announced that their carriage was at the door; and after an affectionate leave-taking of their assembled relatives and friends, they drove off to spend their honeymoon at Richmond-on-Thames.

It is recorded that King George the Third wrote a little song of three stanzas, called "The Lass of Richmond Hill"—a lass who was charming beyond all human comparison, according to the loving monarch's

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estimate, and no doubt some of his servile courtiers professed to believe it. The chorus to each verse of the song is,—

"This lass so neat, who smiles so sweet, has won my right good-will;
I'd crown resign, to call her mine,—sweet lass of Richmond Hill!"

If he were in earnest, it was certainly a vast deal for a mighty king to promise to do for the said lass, however charming she was, and it shows that he was dotingly fond of her. But a king foolishly in love is perhaps as much inclined to make personal sacrifices as the humblest of his subjects—indeed, some kings have been willing to resign infinitely more than an earthly crown for the sake of some lass, who was neither "neat" nor "sweet." Walter had heard his loyal father sing "Sweet Lass of Richmond Hill," on the other side of the globe; and when taking an evening ramble with his young bride, along a secluded avenue by the banks of the Thames at Richmond, Walter, in the joy of his heart, sang the king's little ditty with becoming pathos; and when he had finished, he gallantly declared to his smiling Kate, that neither on Richmond Hill nor on any other hill in the wide world, or in any valley either, was there ever seen a more charming lass than the one he then had leaning on his arm—his own precious wife; and he would challenge any living king or commoner to disprove the fact. I do not know what reply Kate made to that hyperbolical effusion, but I dare say it was something tender and loving. Walter was happy—and so was Kate. All their past troubles were forgotten.

On the day the bridal pair were expected to return

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home from their pleasant tour, Amy was very busy putting her little house in order, to receive them with due honours. She had laid all her neighbours' gardens under contribution for flowers, to bedeck her parlour, and very smart it looked. Harry came home from school for the occasion, and Fred came home as usual at tea-time; and when Kate and Walter arrived, they received a most loving greeting, although it was somewhat uproarious, for the boys were overflowing with jubilant spirits, and could not help making a noise.

It was soon evident that the bride and bridegroom had devoted some part of their honeymoon leisure to planning out their future operations in the practical affairs of life. At tea-time they disclosed their plans; and after a discussion, which lasted till midnight, it was resolved, *nem. con.*, that Amy should accompany them to Sydney. It was also decided that Fred was to remain at the factory until his term of apprenticeship was ended, and Harry was to stay at school till he had finished his education, and then they were to start for Sydney together; and in the meantime, Walter promised to be on the look out for openings, in which they might begin to work their way up in the world.

Selecting a vessel in London, for a long voyage, is not a pleasurable duty, as many experienced passengers could testify. There were several ships advertised for Sydney, and the agent of each one seemed to be extremely desirous of securing Walter and his party as passengers, judging by the way he extolled the weatherly and sailing qualities, and the superior accommodation of his ship. Walter was pretty knowing, in an honest way, but he was not sharp enough for the class of characters he had to deal with, before he could say that he and his belongings were safely on board ship. It would be

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tedious to describe all the perplexities and annoyances of Walter and his wife, and their almost endless outlay of small change, before they were free from the packers, and carriers, and dock porters and others, whose eager eyes seemed to be trying to mesmerise the cash pockets of their struggling victims. But every trouble has an end; and exactly two months after their wedding day Walter and Kate were on board the ship *Spartan*, lying off Gravesend, ready to start the next morning for Sydney. All their goods and chattels were stowed away, and their cabin furniture securely lashed, and they and Amy were glad of a little rest after their fatiguing operations of packing up, and the exciting trial of bidding adieu to their dear relatives and friends in Old England. There were no incidents on the voyage worthy of particular notice in print. But Walter and Kate each declared, that it was by far the most pleasant voyage they had ever made. It was so nice, Kate thought, to have some one to walk the deck with in rough weather—one with a strong arm, which she was not afraid to lean upon, or to clutch tightly when the ship gave an extra lurch. I do heartily wish each young girl of my acquaintance may find such a trusty supporter as Kate had, both for sea and land, for the whole voyage of life. After four months' sailing, the *Spartan* arrived safely in Port Jackson.

Kate had kept up a correspondence with Mrs. Wilton, so of course she wrote all about her wedding; and it was with pleasurable anticipation that the whole household at Yarramundoc awaited the arrival of the ship, with the newly-married pair. The spare room was fresh papered, and many other preparations were made for their reception. They did not remain in Sydney longer than was necessary to get their baggage from the ship,

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and then they all started for Yarramundoc, where they received a very warm welcome. Emma and Jenny met them at the boat jetty, and gave Kate a long, loving embrace, and then they kissed Amy affectionately, and kissed Walter also. They said he was like a dear uncle restored from the depths of the sea, for they had given him up as lost, until they received his letter telling them that he was in London. On their way to the house, the path was strewn with roses and bush flowers; and over the front gateway was a triumphal arch, made with ferns and convolvuli, which the girls had gathered the day before; and a large white flag waved over the hall door, with the word "Welcome" painted on it. Their reception from Mr. and Mrs. Wilton was as affectionate as if they were near and dear relatives; and while the friendly greetings were going on in the hall, the old farm bell rang out a lively salute, and a chorus of hearty hurrahs from the convict men showed that they were rejoiced at the safe return of their respected superintendent, and his young bride. Walter acknowledged the compliment by going out and shaking hands with the men all round, at which act of condescension the poor fellows seemed highly gratified, for it was long since either of them had received a friendly shake of the hand from a free man.

While quietly walking the deck of the ship on his voyage to Sydney, Walter had often reflected on his financial position, which was certainly not very encouraging to a man who had to make a fresh start in life, with a wife and her sister dependent on him. But he was not one to fret much, as I have before shown, and he had the happy faculty of looking on the brightest side of things in general. He had spent nearly £400 since he left Sydney; but he had no extravagance to

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lament, and he had much satisfaction in reflecting on the useful way in which some of his money was expended. He had still £120 left, and his health was restored; and he knew there was every chance in the colony for him to get a comfortable livelihood, and perhaps something more. He was prepared to go to work like a man; and he knew that he had a wife who would cheerfully accommodate her wants to his income, however small it might be. He was thankful for his lot, and he thought it was a very happy one.

However enthusiastic the kind greetings of friends may be to us as visitors to their homes, it is not reasonable to expect such warmth of feeling to be perpetual, and ordinary guests are not often expected to become life-long residents in the family. Walter had too much honesty and independence of spirit to encroach on the hospitality of any friend. A week passed away very pleasantly at Yarramundoc, during which he often revisited, with his darling wife and Emma and Jenny, the many favourite spots where they formerly used to take their rides and rambles. Amy, too, ventured on a pony, and accompanied the merry party; and though the mosquitoes and the sunbeams spoiled her fair complexion for awhile, she enjoyed her new life in the bush thoroughly. But delightsome as such social picnics are, they must not be unreasonably prolonged, or no doubt they would become irksome, as all other recreation does when we take too much of it. Walter soon had to set about the more prosaic duties of earning bread for himself and his household, and providing a home of his own.

In chatting over his affairs with Mr. Wilton one evening, that gentleman kindly remarked, "As you seem disposed to settle down as an agriculturist, Walter, and your means are not sufficient for a large farm, I think

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you may as well rent the two fifty-acre paddocks from me. Five of my men have got their tickets-of-leave since you left me, and I have not strength enough now to work the whole of my cultivation unless I hire free labour, which is very dear at present. I intend to let off some of my land, and I need hardly say that I would prefer you to a stranger for a neighbour, and my wife and girls will be delighted at the arrangement. The two fifty-acre paddocks are, as you know, the best land on the estate, and you will be at no outlay for fences or drains; in fact, with just one surface ploughing you may put in seed at once. I will charge you ten shillings an acre, or you may pay me a grain rent if you prefer it. You can have a run for as many cattle as you will want to keep, you may milk as many of my cows as you please, and you can have the use of my working bullocks for a while, and I will lend you a hand to put up a cottage. Stop—never mind thanking me, Walter. It is a business affair, you know; I want you for a tenant, and if I do not offer you pretty easy terms somebody else will, no doubt; for several of my neighbours are going to divide off their estates into small farms, now that their assigned men are becoming free, by servitude. You can think over my offer, and let me know when you decide about it; but I do hope you will not reject it."

Walter and Kate soon decided to accept Mr. Wilton's liberal offer, and the next day Walter was planning out the site for his new homestead. It does not take long to build a house in the bush, where there is an abundance of timber close at hand. With the willing help of three of Mr. Wilton's handiest men, the shell of a house was up in less than a month; then Kate and Amy, assisted by Emma and Jenny, began the work of in-

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ternal decoration, and a merry time they had over it. It was a slab cottage, covered with shingles and floored with sawn timber. It had four rooms, with two skillion rooms at the back, and a wide verandah in front. The gaps between the slabs outside were stopped up with plaster and nicely whitewashed. The inside walls were covered with a neat, inexpensive paper, and the ceilings were made with cheap white calico. When the house was finished, Mr. and Mrs. Wilton admired it very much; and a pleasant conference was held to decide what name should be given to it. Finally it was resolved that Amy should choose a name, and, after much blushing hesitation, she called it Primrose Cottage, because, she said, her late dear father loved primroses. Next came the more important work of furnishing the cottage; but difficulties all seemed to vanish as soon as they were thought of. It was rare fun for Emma and Jenny to hunt up odds and ends, as they called them, in their own room, and carry them down to the cottage, to make Amy's bedroom look smart; and Mrs. Wilton collected quite a dray-load of useful furniture, which she said she could well spare; so that with the articles which Walter bought from the cabinet-maker at Lashwell, and the various things he himself made out of packing-cases, and which his wife covered with holland or chintz, the house was well furnished with every necessary comfort, and the best parlour looked quite stylish.

Primrose Cottage was pleasantly situated on the margin of the creek, which I have before noticed; and in a few weeks more there was a rustic paling fence around it, and a nice plot laid out for a flower garden, as well as a plot for a kitchen garden in the rear. It certainly was a snug little home in all its surroundings,

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and Kate and Amy were delighted with it. The latter was never weary of working in the front garden, and she showed great taste in the arrangement of flowers and in planting creepers and climbers in every available nook and corner, and everything she planted seemed to grow, as if to reward her for her care and industry.

As soon as his house was habitable, Walter began to prepare his land for seed. Mr. Wilton lent him ploughs and bullocks, and by the middle of May he had one paddock (or field, as it would be called by English farmers) sown with Cape and English barley, and the other with wheat. He then began to erect a stock-yard, milking bails, pigstye, dairy, fowl-house, and other necessary adjuncts to a farmstead. The season proved a very favourable one, and Walter had the satisfaction of seeing, as the summer advanced, his land showing promise of an abundant harvest. He hired a man and his wife, the former to work on the farm, and the latter to help in the housework and in the dairy. All his money was expended, but he had stores laid in to last till harvest, and he had a comfortable feeling of independence—for he was not in debt.

Never was there a happier little homestead in the land. Kate and Amy were usually busy in the house or the dairy, or in the garden, all day long, and their cheerful songs proved that their work was not irksome to them. They often, with surgings of grateful emotion, contrasted their present condition of independence and plenty with their former life-wearing toil and semi-starvation; and heartily they wished that hundreds of poor girls who were working themselves to death in overcrowded London could find their way out to Australia, where honest industry is sure to receive an adequate recompense. Emma and Jenny paid almost daily visits

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to Primrose Cottage—not ceremonious or formal visits, for instead of leaving their cards, in fashionable style, they usually left a large bouquet of flowers, or a basketful of fruit, or something equally acceptable. It was always a joy to the dear girls to be giving from their abundance of good things to some person who had less than themselves. Mrs. Wilton, too, would often take her little work-basket and sit with Kate for a whole afternoon; and Kate felt the value of her maternal counsel. Their evenings were usually spent in reading or music, for Kate had a nice piano in her front parlour. Altogether, theirs was a routine of rural felicity such as I lack the power to describe, but which in my heart I would prefer to the grandest display wealth could make up in fashionable life.

Harvest time came in due course, and about the same time Kate presented her delighted husband with a fine little son. Never was there a handsomer baby born into the world than Kate's baby, if the joint assertions of Aunt Amy and Emma and Jenny Wilton were accepted as a fact. Few babies have been more joyfully welcomed into society, or received a larger share of fondling from parents and friends. It was the supreme enjoyment of Auntie to nurse her new nephew, and her pet chickens in the poultry yard and the flowers in her garden were almost slighted.

On Christmas Day baby was christened, an event which specially marked that season as the happiest Christmas Kate had ever seen. When she returned home from the church, she clasped little Arthur to her breast in an ecstasy of grateful feeling which made Walter's heart glow in sympathy, and with an earnestness of tone which he had never heard her express before, she said: "On this hallowed day I here reverently

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promise that I will do my utmost to train my darling boy in the fear of the Lord. And it shall be my daily prayer that he may grow up to be a very useful man—to be an honour and a blessing to this good land of Australia, which has given me a home full of happiness, in exchange for a dreary lot of poverty and anxiety in the far-off land of my birth."

It was Amy's first Christmas in Australia, and she could hardly realize the fact that it really was a return of that festive day, which in her former experience had often been ushered in by howling east winds or snow-storms. It was so beautifully strange to her to see the bees humming among the bright flowers in her garden, and the birds chirping in the fruit trees, or pecking off the ripe grapes from the vines at Yarramundoc. Though it was warm in the house and quite sultry out of doors, and though the mosquitoes were spitefully active everywhere, Amy said she enjoyed the sunshiny Christmas weather of Australia much more than she did the frost and snow of Old England, though it was her dear native land. It is no wonder that she said so, for her last two Christmas Days had not been of the merry sort, but quite the contrary. There was no blazing "yule log" in the parlour chimney to make her forget the cold weather; and not overmuch of the good cheer in the cupboard which is poetically associated with Christmas time in England and elsewhere. But poor as they were on last Christmas Day, Kate and Amy had kept up the time-hallowed custom of decorating their little home with holly, out of respect to the memory of their dear father, who always loved to see some evergreens in his house at Christmas-tide. Holly was dear in London, and Kate could only afford to buy sixpenny-worth, but Amy had made that go a surprisingly long

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way in garnishing their little parlour, and not a leaf was wasted. She remembered her past economical efforts in that way, on that really merry Christmas Eve when Walter brought in a dray-load of green boughs and shrubs from the bush paddock, for Amy and her young friends, Emma and Jenny, to decorate Primrose Cottage, in preparation for a Christmas party.

It was no doubt rather vexing to the family to see, on their return from church on Christmas morning, that their pet cow had, during their absence from home, walked into the dining-room through the open French window, and eaten most of the fruit and flowers, which Amy and Kate had taken such pains to place on the table in tasteful style. But they soon got over that little trouble,—indeed, they and their guests were quite merry about it at dessert time, and especially so when the huge water-melon was exhibited, with grinning marks of the cow's teeth on it, and comical Jenny Wilton began to sing, in her liveliest tones, that old-fashioned English song—or her own version of it—"Away with melan-cow-ly."

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CHAPTER XXX.

"Home, dear home! small as thou art, to me thou art a palace."

AT the end of Walter's first year on his new farm, he estimated that his clear gains were over four hundred pounds, for he had reaped an abundant harvest. Wheat was then worth about ten shillings a bushel, and other farm produce was proportionately high. That was a very encouraging beginning, and to some modern farmers it may seem almost too good to be true. The next year was nearly as favourable, but in August of the third year a flood came, and swept over his farm with devastating effect, destroying his crops, drowning some of his live stock, and completely submerging his house. With much difficulty Walter and Kate and her two children, one of them only five weeks old, and Amy, escaped in a boat to Mr. Wilton's house, which was a general harbour of refuge for the farmers in the neighbourhood, whose homes had been inundated or swept away.

When the flood waters subsided, a pitiable scene of wreck and ruin presented itself. Primrose Cottage was standing in a lake of mud, but scarcely a vestige of the barn or out-buildings could be seen. Walter would fain have paid his first visit to his ruined home alone, but Kate and Amy begged so earnestly to go, that he got horses for them, and they reached the cottage through a thick mass of silt, which covered his once promising crops. Many of my country readers in

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Australia will understand, from sad experience, the feelings of Kate and her sister when they entered the cottage, which about a fortnight before was a picture of neatness and comfort, and found that many articles in it were irretrievably spoiled, and that some things had floated out of the windows and doorways, and were lost. Who will wonder that they wept over the dismal scene of destruction, and that Walter looked disheartened?

But though Walter's losses by the flood which rushed over his farm were severe, he did not waste much time in fretting over them. He resolved to shift his homestead beyond the reach of flood waters. There was a pleasant elevation at one end of his farm, and he blamed himself for lack of foresight in not selecting that site for his home at first. It is true it was nearly half a mile from the river, but he thought it would be better to submit to even a greater inconvenience, rather than again risk the lives of his family, and the safety of all their home treasures. He forthwith set to work to pull down his cottage, and to re-erect it on the new site; and in the meantime, Kate and her children and Amy were guests of Mrs. Wilton.

If a native of London, or of any other great city,—one who had had no experience of rural life,—were to arrive in Australia, and go direct to the Hunter or the Hawkesbury Rivers, and were unlucky enough to be caged in by flood waters, as I once was on my visit to the Manning River, I daresay he would be inclined to think he saw nothing but absolute ruin around him. But if he were to visit the same localities a few months afterwards (provided the season had been moderately favourable in the interim), he would be delightfully surprised at the change in the whole face of the country.

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Instead of general wreck and ruin, he would see smiling fields of farm produce ripening for the market, and pasture land and gardens and orchards would be teeming with new life—with verdure and fruitfulness and floral beauty. His eyes would hardly notice a sign of the rushing flood waters, for he would perhaps not think to look up into the trees for *débris* of the late flood.

I have specially mentioned the Hawkesbury and Hunter Rivers, because the vast alluvial tracts on their banks were in former years the principal agricultural lands of the colony, mostly occupied by tenant farmers. But since the new Land Act of 1861 has made it easy for men of small capital to acquire land of their own, farmers are settling all over the colony; in proof of which, I may state that during the twelve years subsequent to the new Land Act coming into operation, more than seventy-three thousand persons had selected land, to the extent of rather more than six and a half millions of acres. The alluvial flats in the valleys of the Hawkesbury and the Hunter are still cultivated; and although year after year floods have occurred, doing more or less mischief, the farmers are not to be scared off their precarious holdings; or if one poor unlucky fellow, who has been flooded out till he is utterly dispirited, should leave his farm to better himself elsewhere, his late landlord has no difficulty in re-letting the land, and at a rent which seems to be high, considering the uncertainty of reaping a crop after the labour and expense of sowing it. The reason of the somewhat reckless tenacity of the farmers to occupy the low-lying farms on the banks of those rivers is, that the land is wonderfully productive. Each flood leaves behind it a layer of silt or mud, which enriches the land, and large crops of maize are usually

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"What a little nervous mortal you are, dear!" said Mrs. Wilton, when Kate expressed her anxiety about the contents of the letter. "One would think you had something in your hand that would bite you, or else explode and disfigure you for life! I have received dozens of letters for Mr. Wilton from the same legal firm, years ago, and they never made me tremble as you do now. But I am forgetting, love, that we are all differently constituted," added Mrs. Wilton, tenderly, as she saw poor Kate's tears starting. "I ought to be very thankful that I have moderately strong nerves, and I should try to help those who are less fortunate in that respect—yourself to wit, Kate. Now I will tell you what I think you had better do with this exciting letter. You will not open it? No—no—well, that is right, perhaps; I never open Mr. Wilton's business letters unless he specially wishes me to do so. It is marked 'Immediate,' but that is a common mark with lawyers, just to show off their importance—patience knows, they are not often in a hurry to settle their clients' business. However urgent as this affair may be, Walter could not attend to it to-day, for Messrs. Turner's office would be closed before he could get to Maitland; so you may safely put the letter aside till he comes home in the evening. After tea, when he has rested a little and forgotten some of his dreary ruminations over the ruins of Primrose Cottage, you may give him the letter, and I'll warrant he will not faint away, whatever it contains. He is too much of a man to let a little bothersome news upset him very long. It may not be a serious affair, after all; but if it should be, you cannot help it; so in the meantime you may just as well make your anxious mind easy on the subject. Remember the sensible little bit of philosophy, in rhyme, that you have

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often heard me quote, when I have been trying to keep my courage up under affliction. 'In trouble to be troubled, is to have our trouble doubled.' 'I have given you my advice, Kate; and it is as honest as any opinion you would get from a lawyer, however much you paid him for it—and I will give you a kiss into the bargain. Now cheer up, love!"

After tea, Kate handed Walter the letter, and she watched him with ill-concealed anxiety as he coolly broke the seal; but the next moment a load seemed to slip from her heart, for she could see by her dear husband's face that her forebodings of fresh law-suits had been groundless. The letter was only a short one, but it contained the important news that under the last will and testament of Thomas Green, late of Inverell, Mr. Walter Thompson was left sole legatee to all the real and personal estate and effects of the deceased; and Mr. Thompson was requested to communicate without delay with the firm whose names were appended to the letter.

It would be unreasonable to suppose that grief for the death of Tom Green very much marred the satisfaction which Walter felt at his unexpected good fortune, or that it stopped Mr. and Mrs. Wilton from offering their congratulations to him. They each made some feeling allusion to poor Tom's honest and straightforward conduct, when he lived in that neighbourhood, and expressed their admiration for the kindly spirit he manifested towards Mr. Thompson, who had befriended him in his time of persecution. And Walter felt more than he could then express, at the substantial proof of the lasting gratitude of a poor fellow whom he had long since forgotten.

It will be remembered that Tom Green was the

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convict whose case I noticed in my ninth chapter. After he got his ticket of leave changed from the Lashwell district to New England (which was effected through the influence of Mr. Thompson), he set up in business for himself as a wheelwright; and being clever at his trade, and very steady, and withal a shrewd, honest fellow, he could not but make money. He seemed also to have the faculty of taking care of the money he made. He had frequent opportunities of buying horses and cattle very cheap, and he also bought small lots of land in promising localities; and it is probable that if he had lived to the present time, Tom Green would have been a wealthy and influential man—would have risen in the social scale, as many men of his class have risen in New South Wales and elsewhere. During the short interval that preceded his death (after the accident which caused it), he sent for a solicitor and executed a will, in which he bequeathed everything he possessed to Walter Thompson, in grateful remembrance of the kindness he showed to him when he was a poor, ill-used convict man. I may mention that Tom was not married, and he had no relatives in Australia.

Walter had long fancied that holding the plough or driving bullocks were not occupations that he was most fitted for, or that were likely, on that small farm, to yield him an income sufficient to rear up his family in the way he desired. Still he was willing "to labour and to wait," and he was happy and contented with his lot, until the flood came and washed him out of his home. Tom Green's legacy was a most comforting help, and it came just at the right time. Had it come a few months before, when Walter's crops were looking so very promising, it is not unlikely that he

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might have been induced to expend some of his new capital in building larger barns, and enlarging his house, and in making other expensive improvements, which some future flood would have destroyed; but the storm which wrecked his house and his crops, was to him a salutary warning to quit farming on a low, alluvial flat; and poor Tom's money floated him out of the eddy of difficulty into the tideway of fortune.

Doubtless Walter felt a manly regret at the untimely death of faithful Tom Green; but it was only natural for him to be somewhat elated at the useful accession to his finances. After certain legal forms had been gone through, there was no obstacle to Walter's taking possession of his new estate immediately; and it was delicately hinted to him, that perhaps the sooner he went to look after his live stock the better, or some of it might stray away. It was arranged that Kate and her children and Amy should continue to live at Yarramundoc for awhile longer, and then Walter set out on his journey to Inverell. Riding a spirited horse on a good road, and with such an object in view, was an exhilarating change from his late grimy occupation of pulling down and carting away the wreck of his cottage, and no doubt Walter felt its enlivening influence. I cannot help wishing that I were riding on some cheering errand this morning in dear sunny Australia, instead of sitting writing about it on the northern side of the earth, with the thermometer outside of my house only fifteen degrees above zero. And I think I should enjoy such a ride in the bush more, if a nice hot wind were blowing, for I want a good airing. It is a wonder to me that some old colonists, who can afford to live where they please, should prefer England to Australia. For the last three years the winters here have been as

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cold as Cape Horn, and I have not often been comfortably warm, even in summer time. The liveliness is all shivering out of my constitution; my brain itself seems frigid, and though it is now "Merry Christmas" season, there is no more holiday elasticity in my heart than there is in the cast-iron weight of a turret clock. I beg pardon for this gloomy, personal digression.

I have before stated that the late Tom Green had from time to time invested part of his savings in horses and cattle of good breeds, and his stock had increased very much. It is not necessary for me to go into particulars of Walter's doings, after taking possession of his new property. He had some trouble with the stockmen, who seemed to be jealous that their late master had not left his cattle and horses to them; but Walter had a happy way of managing men. He had reason to believe that some of his cattle had *strayed* away from his paddocks into the bush; but he thought it was better to stay and dispose of the stock that remained, than to go in search of the missing ones, with very little chance of finding them. It fortunately happened that about that time a gentleman was buying horses for the Indian army, and Walter had no difficulty in selling the whole of his stud at good prices, for his horses were the sort of animals that were suitable for the service. He soon afterwards sold his cattle, with a right of brand, to a squatter in the district. He also realized on the other personal effects, and after a few weeks' absence he returned to Yarramundoc with the proceeds of his sales, amounting to over fifteen hundred pounds.

How to invest his capital to the best advantage was now the subject of Walter's careful deliberation. His trusty friend, Mr. Wilton, did not selfishly wish him to

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return to the little farm, and expend his money in improving it. He knew that one hundred acres of arable land would not long yield an adequate return for Walter's increasing family wants. He had only advised Walter to take the farm as a temporary expedient, until something better presented itself; in fact, it was a delicate way of helping him to make a start for himself—a brotherly action done in a loving, unselfish spirit.

Although Walter had never expressed a word of dissatisfaction at his position in the hearing of any human being, he had sometimes, when trying to look a few years into the future, foreseen obstacles in the way of his social advancement, if he were to remain long in the place where he was then so cosily settled—in the humble cot that he first called his own home. It was not mere pride that made him wish to exchange the plodding work of a small farmer for the more remunerative and lordly occupation of a grazier (or squatter), and it certainly was not an idle hankering after an easier life; but it was mainly the wish to see his wife somewhat relieved of domestic drudgery, and also to secure the means of providing suitable education for his children as they grew older. When Mr. Wilton counselled him to give up his farm at once, and look out for a squattage, Walter's heart and his judgment responded to the proposal; and he then told his kind friend how much he had been wishing for such a change of occupation, although he had not seen the remotest chance of such a change until the recent unlooked-for accession to his capital had seemingly opened out a way for him.

Walter's warm expressions of gratitude for the generosity of Mr. Wilton and his family were gently checked by Mr. Wilton, and they then went into a lengthy discus-

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sion as to the ways and means, and the best locality for Walter to settle down in his proposed new occupation. It was agreed that New England was the most desirable district to settle in, on account of the many natural advantages, such as a healthy climate, excellent pasturage and water, and further, of the superior society Kate would have the privilege of enjoying; for many highly respectable families were then settled in New England. But without much argument, it was thought impracticable to buy a cattle or sheep station in that favourite district, with such comparatively trifling capital as Walter had to invest; and their conference ended, at a late hour that night, without any definite plan having been settled. But a few days afterwards (during which interval both gentlemen had given the important matter their best consideration), it was decided that the safest plan was for Walter to go for a month or two on a sort of exploring or reconnoitring tour, into some of the unsettled parts of the colony, with a view to taking up new land on the easy terms which the Government were then offering, as an inducement to pioneers to push into the interior of the country, and form sheep or cattle stations. Mr. and Mrs. Wilton again kindly offered Kate and Amy and the children a home at Yarramundoc, during Walter's absence. He soon afterwards set out on his important journey, with a complete bushman's outfit of blankets, tin pots, etc., strapped before and behind him on his favourite horse.

At the urgent request of Kate, seconded by the persuasion of Mrs. Wilton, Walter took with him, as travelling companion and general help, an aboriginal named Billy, a very active and intelligent black of the Port Stephen's tribe, whom Walter had known for some time, and had proved him to be a faithful, affectionate

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servant, so long as he could be kept from drinking "betalligo" (*i.e.*, spirits). Kate said she should always feel uneasy if Walter went away alone, lest any mishap might befal him; and her anxious fancy suggested many dreadful contingencies, such as being swept from his horse while crossing a flooded creek, or being struck by a falling tree in the bush, or his horse stumbling and throwing him off; in either case it would be handy to have some person with him. Billy was very willing to go; indeed, he was delighted at the idea of having a long ride, for he was very fond of horses, and was an expert and fearless rider. He was specially equipped for the journey; and on the morning that he set off with his master he was as proud as a grenadier corporal, and he looked uncommonly smart in his new red shirt, moleskin trousers, long boots with spurs to them, and a new cabbage-tree hat on his woolly head. He was mounted on a good horse, and had his "swag," or blankets, tin pots, and his ration bag, also two pairs of horse hobbles, strapped on his saddle. Billy was a favourite with the ladies at Yarramundoc; so they all came out to bid him good-bye as he was starting off, at a respectful distance behind his master. They were highly amused at his honest politeness, when he took off his hat and said, "Good-bye, Missie Wilton! Good-bye, Missie Thomson! Ha ha! Jenny! Amy! Good-bye! All right, massa—I'm comin'. Baal I cry—no fear! ha ha!" The last sentences were in reply to a playful remark of his master about his crying after the girls.

A few hours after leaving home, as Walter was crossing the Wollombi Ranges, he overtook a gentleman whom he had known some years before as superintendent of a cattle station on the Gwyder River; and

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by a fortunate coincidence, it soon appeared that Mr. Horton was travelling with a similar object in view that Walter had—namely, to look for suitable country where he could take up a cattle run for himself. There was this difference, however, between their pursuits, that Mr. Horton's course seemed to be more defined than Walter's. He said that two intimate friends of his had lately taken up runs in a new part of the southern country, called Gippsland, and they had written him such encouraging accounts of the part, as a splendid fattening district, that he had resolved to go and see it and judge for himself, and he should most likely make a good pick while he had the chance.

Mr. Wilton had counselled Walter to start off in a westerly direction, across the Blue Mountains, and make for the Lachlan River, where he knew there were large tracts of unoccupied country, suitable either for cattle or sheep; but having fallen in with his old neighbour, Walter felt disposed to keep with him for a few days. Mr. Horton was a Christian gentleman, so he was an agreeable companion for Walter; besides, he was what is called a first-rate bushman, and had twice travelled overland from the Hunter River to Melbourne. In those times of the colony's penal history, it was very desirable for a traveller through the bush to have a bold companion or two, for there were many bushrangers about. It was a common event for convict men of the hardened sort to run away from their assigned service or from the road gangs, and band together to "stick up" or rob any traveller who met them, and could not outride them. Woe betide the unlucky masters or overseers who had become notorious for using their convict men harshly, if they fell into the clutches of the bushrangers. Cases have been known where such unpopular masters have

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been mercilessly flogged, after a sort of mock trial; and a tyrannical overseer was once caught, and tied to a tree near to a soldier-ant's nest, and the poor fellow endured the most miserable torture that can well be conceived before he was rescued.

Walter was not a man to be easily turned aside from a deliberately formed plan of action by any new scheme that was suddenly presented to him, however feasible it might look; and highly as Mr. Horton seemed to think of the fine grazing country at Gippsland, Walter reasoned that, after all, he was only judging of it by the description given by his two friends who were located there; and it was not unlikely that they were over-sanguine in their estimate of the goodness of the land, and quite possible, too, that they might be interested, by personal motives, in getting their friend Horton to squat in their neighbourhood. Walter further reflected that he was on a very serious errand, and the success or failure of his future pastoral occupations might depend on the choice he made of a station. Moreover, he had been advised by his sagacious friend, Mr. Wilton, to go to the westward of the Blue Mountains and look about him, and thither he would go first of all.

On chatting over items of mutual interest in a confidential way as they rode along together on the day after they met, the two friends came to the determination to give each other the benefit of their individual judgment and experience in the important matter of selecting their new runs. Horton generously proposed to go with Walter to the western district; and it was agreed that after they had taken a careful look about them there, they would cross the country together to Gippsland. When they had decided on the most suit-

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able country, they would, if practicable, select land so as to be near neighbours, for the mutual help and comfort of themselves and their wives and families. Accordingly they took the most direct route through the Grose Valley to the county of King. There they spent more than three weeks riding about and exploring the country on the Lachlan, and Abercrombie, and Logan Rivers, and some of the tributary creeks; and they saw many fine tracts of unoccupied country, abundantly grassed and well watered, which they were strongly inclined to select from, for it seemed hardly possible for them to find better runs; but keeping stanch to their first plan, they crossed the country south-eastwards, and at length reached Gippsland in safety. There they were hospitably received by Mr. Horton's friends, who had two fine cattle stations, together about 40,000 acres.

It might be interesting to some of my readers to know something about Walter's long ride over many hundreds of miles of new country; for it must be almost impossible for travellers to take such a journey without meeting with incidents or adventures worthy of being noted, especially as they for the most part of the time camped out in the bush each night. But I am careful not to make my tale over-lengthy, and I have yet some important matters to touch upon, that will perhaps be more interesting than Walter's adventures in the wild bush. Wild and difficult he certainly found some parts of the journey to be, and particularly on his cross-country ride from the Boorowa River to Gippsland. But leaving Walter the privilege of writing all about his bush experiences, whenever he chooses to do so, I will now briefly record that he and Mr. Horton made a careful exploration of much of the unsettled parts of Gippsland for a fortnight, and during that time they

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were favoured with the local knowledge and judgment of Horton's two friends. Eventually they each took up a tract of fine open country, which was then covered with fattening grasses fully three feet high. A fresh-water creek ran through it, and that served instead of a dividing fence, for about nine miles, between their respective squattages. Walter's run was estimated at about twelve thousand acres.

I may here mention, at that time all that land formed part of the territory of New South Wales; but in 1851 the colony of Victoria was established, and its dividing boundary line on the north took in the whole of Gippsland.

Walter had made choice of his station, and also the site for his new homestead—two important matters, and he had reason to be pleased with his selections. But he had much work to do before he could sit down under his own vine and fig tree.

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CHAPTER XXXII.

"Let a man do his work; the fruit of it is in the care of another than he."—*Carlyle.*

WHILE on his exploring tour in search of a station, it was less trouble to Walter to find good unoccupied country, suitable for either sheep or cattle, than it was for him to make up his mind which fine tract to select for himself, out of an almost unlimited choice. It is far different at the present day; and persons in want of good stations, within any of the settled districts of the Australian colonies, must be prepared to pay a high price for them, when they find an owner willing to sell out. They will now have to go some hundreds of miles into the interior to find good grazing land that is untenanted. Still, there are immense tracts of backwoods, that are occupied only by aboriginal tribes as their hunting-grounds; and doubtless they will continue to be gradually taken up as squattages, by some of our enterprising Anglo-Saxon sons and daughters, to whom a nomadic life has attractive charms that outweigh the risks and social inconveniences of their isolated homes; besides, the probability of their making a fortune in a few years usually acts as a nice compensating balance.

Perhaps the run which Walter pegged out as his own, at Gippsland, was not better grassed and watered than many unoccupied tracts of country that he had seen elsewhere; but he had an idea that, being farther south,

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the summer hot winds would be less oppressive than they usually are west of the Blue Mountains, and consequently the climate would be more bracing, and better suited to the Anglican constitutions of his wife and her sister. Another reason which influenced his decision was the advantage of having Mr. Horton and his courteous friends, Messrs. Adams and their wives, for neighbours. Persons who live in the far bush know how to appreciate the privilege of having a few respectable families within a radius of twenty miles or so of their homes; and some unhappy squatters in new localities also know, to their annoyance and loss, what it is to have Government land adjacent to their own stations, leased or purchased by persons of disagreeable natures, or positively bad characters.

Having roughly defined the boundaries of his run, and taken the necessary steps for having the land leased to him by the Government authorities, Walter next set about choosing a site for his new house. He would fain have had his wife there to assist him in his choice, for she had a poet's eye for natural beauties of situation, as well as good practical judgment of domestic conveniences. However, as it was impracticable to get her aid in the matter, he took extra care himself; and after a week's thorough examination of all the most eligible parts of his run, he fixed the site of his house on a prettily situated elevation not far from the boundary creek, and which promised to give a commanding view of the surrounding country, when the heaviest of the timber was cleared off. Mr. Horton was so pleased with Walter's choice, that he chose a site on the opposite side of the creek, and which would be within sight of Walter's house when it was erected.

There was an abundance of fine timber on his land, so

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Walter, at the recommendation of the Messrs. Adams, hired two pairs of sawyers, and set them to work to saw the timber for his house and outbuildings. He also hired several bushmen to fell and clear off the brush-wood, and to fence in about fifty acres of land for home paddocks, gardens, etc. He was fortunate enough to secure the only pair of quarrymen that were in the district, and they agreed to get all the stone that was required for foundations for the house, and for the chimneys and for paving. There was plenty of building stone near the creek, and limestone was to be got at no great distance off. After attending to all that was necessary, and leaving instructions concerning his workmen with Messrs. Adams, who in the most neighbourly way offered to help him as far as they could, Walter prepared to return to Yarramundoc, to give his loving wife a full account of all his doings since he last parted from her. He had occasionally written to apprise her of his well-being, and briefly stated that all his plans were maturing as nicely as he could wish; but it is not likely that he could spare time to give her a full report of his operations. The interesting details of his tour were reserved for future hours of cosy fireside chat with dear Kate and Amy, and their good friends the Wilton family.

It was a joyful day when Walter took leave of his generous hosts, Messrs. Adams, and his friend Horton, and mounted his horse to return homeward, accompanied by his faithful valet, Billy, who had been quite true to his promise to his mistress, to be sober, and always to keep near his master when in the bush. Walter had no harassing misgivings, as he rode along, that when he got home, his wife would show dissatisfaction at any of his arrangements, much less that she would querulously object to go so far into the bush, or express any gloomy

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forebodings of evils that could barely be put down as probable contingencies. Kate had too much sense and good feeling, and withal she had too much love and respect for her husband, to grieve and depress him by any such unwomanly weakness. She knew that he was using his best judgment, and putting forth his utmost efforts for the general good of his household, and she was prepared to help him under all circumstances, come good fortune or misfortune, in accordance with her solemn marriage vows.

Walter took the most direct route homeward, road or no road, and he camped in the bush at nights when he could not reach an inn or an accommodation house, or some hospitable settler's home. Billy was very helpful to him, for, like the generality of the aborigines, he was an expert bushman. He had made himself useful in the kitchen at Messrs. Adams' establishment during Walter's stay there, and he was quite a favourite with all the hands about the station, for his willingness to work: and his merry humour and comical antics were always amusing to the children of the homestead. Walter's camping-place at night was chosen, when practicable, near to a creek or water-hole, where there was water and feed for the horses. In the first place the horses were hobbled, then unsaddled and turned out to graze. A fire was soon kindled, and the quart pots put on to make tea. Master and man would then sit beside the fire and partake of the homely fare which each one carried in his wallet, or ration bag. Then more fuel was collected, and the fire was made up for the night; and the wearied travellers each spread his blankets on the ground, and with his saddle for a pillow, and the sky for a canopy, would pass the night in sleep, and sometimes awaken in the early morning more refreshed than some

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persons have felt on rising from a feather bed. Walter's first job after sunrise was to replenish the fire and put the teapots on again for breakfast; meanwhile Billy would go in search of the horses.

To many clever men—citizens even of enlightened London—the task of catching two horses in a wild Australian bush, would seem as hopeless as catching two hares in a wood, merely by soft words and wheedling gestures. But Billy felt as sure of getting his horses as if he knew they were tethered to a stump. On one or two occasions he was several hours on his errand, when the animals had wandered off farther than usual; but Walter never had any fear that his man would be lost in the bush, or that he would fail to track the straying horses. He would perhaps suddenly return after a prolonged absence, at the opposite part of the bush to the one he started from, and exclaim, with a good-natured smile on his black face, "Hallo, massa! I bin come back agin. Horses sit down murra long way, massa." By which he meant to say, that the animals had gone off a long way from the camp. But he had tracked them through the thick forest, and found his way back to the camping-place with the instinct of a bird. Low as the Australian blacks are classed in the scale of humanity, I would much rather have such an one as Billy for my travelling companion, across a rough country, than I would have the most learned professor that ever wrote or lectured on ethnology, if he had never been in the bush.

There was rejoicing in the house at Yarramundoc when Walter returned one evening at tea-time. I wish I could describe the loving welcome he received, and how he kissed and fondled his two darling little children, who had grown amazingly during his

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three months' absence; and also tell of Billy's capersome antics in the front verandah, to express his delight at seeing all his good friends again; and especially to tell of his overflowing joy when Kate and Amy shook hands with him, and thanked him for taking care of his master. But pleasant as it would be to describe some of that happy domestic scene, I have not space for it. I must also refrain from reporting other interesting occurrences during Walter's absence.

As he had anticipated, his doings were highly approved of by his loving wife, and by Mr. and Mrs. Wilton also. Kate and Amy were almost impatient to go and see the site of their new home by the charming creek, which Walter had depicted in such romantic terms. After sufficient deliberation, it was deemed best for Walter to return to his new station, and get the house partially erected and other necessary work about the station begun, and in the meantime Kate and her children and Amy were still to remain at Yarramundoc; so he stayed about a fortnight with his family, and then set off again for Gippsland. But his handy man, Billy, did not accompany him.

Walter paid Billy the balance of his wages the day after his return, and he started for the township to buy some new clothes. He changed his cheque for £4 at a store in Lashwell, and laid out about half of the amount in useful articles; but he was unfortunately persuaded, by some dissipated white men, to go with them to a public house; and the result may easily be imagined by any one who has had the least experience with Australian blacks. Poor Billy's money was soon spent, and then his new clothing was sold for drink; finally the clothes he had on were disposed of in some way. He stopped at the inn until he was driven away as a

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nuisance; and on the eve of Walter's departure for Gippsland, Billy returned to Yarramundoc, clad only in his red shirt, in a deplorable state of nervous prostration, from excessive drinking. He piteously begged Walter to take him with him to the station; but it was quite impracticable. Billy was suffering from *delirium tremens*, so he would have been useless as well as dangerous for a bush guide or helper. Alas! poor Billy. He was soon afterwards found dead in the bush. A similar fate has befallen a host of his luckless brethren, in less than a century of the white man's civilizing rule over the great Australian continent.

The ensuing half-year was perhaps the roughest period of Walter's life. The Messrs. Adams generously offered him accommodation at their home; but he wished to be on the spot, to expedite the erection of his own house; and going to and from his friends' house, five miles distant, would necessarily encroach on his time; so he had a bark hut built for himself, and there he lived in primitive style, or, as Amy said in one of her amusing letters, "like a gentle hermit of the dale." But his patience was no doubt strengthened by the comforting idea that every day's hard labour shortened the term of his lonely probation; and there was a pleasant stimulus in the thought that he was working for himself and his beloved family. Still, with all his efforts, moral as well as physical, the work did not go on so fast as he wished. His sawyers were not up to time, and that threw his carpenters out of their calculations, and in their turn the plasterers were delayed; so the house was three months longer in building than the contract time. When Walter saw that it was far enough advanced for a part of it to be occupied with safety, he started again for Yarramundoc—as he ex-

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plained to Mrs. Adams, "to fetch all his precious pet birds to put into their new cage."

Numberless families in the world know something about the inconvenience of shifting household effects from one dwelling-place to another, but comparatively few have experienced such real trials in that way as the Thompson family endured when they removed to their new station. After much consideration, Walter decided that the most practicable way of conveying his household goods and his family, would be by way of Melbourne. The course he mapped out was, first of all by small boats to Lashwell, thence to Sydney by steamer, and then to Melbourne by steamer or sailing vessel, and from thence to Gippsland by coach and bullock teams. Altogether, the distance was not much less than a thousand miles. As the goods would have to be handled so often in transhipment, and also be jolted over many miles of rough roads in the drays, it was necessary that they should be very securely packed, and that was not an easy operation, nevertheless it was accomplished. Kate and Amy got careful help from Mrs. Wilton and her daughters in packing all the fragile chattels, and Walter attended to the packing of the less perishable articles. Some of the most bulky things, which had been much damaged by the flood, it was deemed best to leave for the furniture broker at Lashwell, as the expense of freight would be more than the cost of similar articles in Melbourne.

Walter hired Jem Brown, whom I have named in a previous chapter. Jem's term of penal servitude had expired, and he was free to go anywhere he chose. He was one of the cleverest of Mr. Wilton's men, and could do any sort of bush work, including sawing timber, splitting slabs or shingles, or stripping bark for roofing

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purposes; and he was handy at fencing, and any rough carpenter's work. He was also useful as a stockman, for he was a fearless rider and a good bushman, and withal he was sober and trustworthy. Mr. Wilton was willing to spare Jem, as a favour to Walter, and the man was very anxious to go, for he was faithfully attached to Walter and Kate; moreover, he sagely argued, that if he went to a new country where he was a stranger, he might perhaps have a better chance of getting on in the world than he could do in a part where it was well known that he had been a convict, and where some ill-natured persons would despise him on that account, notwithstanding his constant efforts to retrieve his character.

I should have before mentioned, that soon after they settled in Primrose Cottage, Kate adopted a little half-caste girl, about eleven years of age. Her mother was an aboriginal black, of the Port Stephen's tribe, and it was currently supposed that her father was a gentleman grazier, well known in that locality; but of course he did not acknowledge his paternity. Poor little Molly was living in the blacks' camp; and she was cruelly treated by the tribe, as half-caste children usually were. She would in all probability have been lured into vicious practices, as she grew up to womanhood, had not Kate and Walter come to her rescue in good time. For a small consideration the girl's mother was induced to give her up, and Molly seemed willing to exchange her hard lot of semi-starvation and nudity for suitable clothing and board and lodging in Mr. Thompson's kitchen.

Mrs. Beecher Stowe, in her admirable book, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," very humorously describes the troubles and perplexities of "Aunt Ophelia," in her kind efforts

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to remodel the little slave girl, Topsy. But her task was light compared with the work that Kate and Amy had with their poor neglected charge, for the first few months that she was under their training. Topsy was a teasing creature, no doubt; still she was in some degree civilized, and she did not show a disposition to run away from her preceptress; but Molly was wholly untaught, and almost as untameable as one of the wild dingoes, or native dogs, that are such dreaded pests to the Australian sheep farmer. Having good clothing and food, and sleeping in a comfortable bed under a roof, were attractive novelties to her for a few days; but she soon began to show a restless desire to return to her former roving life, and but for the unceasing vigilance of Kate and Amy, she would have run off to the blacks' camp in the distant bush. But their patient kindness, and their untiring efforts to instruct Molly in the rudiments of domestic work, and, above all, their religious counsel and example, after awhile produced a softening influence on the poor child's callous feelings, and she grew so much attached to the family that there was no longer any necessity for watching her to prevent her from running away. When Kate's first baby was born, it was an additional tie to Molly, and she by degrees grew devotedly fond of it, and proved a most trustworthy nurse.

The irksome duty of teaching Molly to master the English alphabet might have discouraged any person with only an average share of patience from attempting any further instruction to so unwilling a pupil; but Amy was, as I have before stated, exceedingly kind and gentle in her manner; she was persevering also, and after awhile she had the satisfaction of seeing that Molly began to show a real desire to learn. She had

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good capacity, and her steady progress in reading and writing was astonishing to some persons who had preconceived notions that the aboriginal natives in general are incapable of moral or intellectual improvement. Happily for the remnant of that long-neglected race, public sympathy in their behalf is awakening, and the persevering efforts of a few quiet toilers in the self-denying work of instructing the native blacks are being recognised. As an example of that encouraging fact, I will give an extract from a newspaper report (see Appendix), with some interesting particulars of the progress of an aboriginal school on the Murray River. I may here state that Mr. Matthews, the founder of the school, or the Malaga mission, is an earnest Christian worker, and his wife (whom I have the honour of knowing personally) is as exemplary a teacher as Amy Maysen.

It is not necessary for me to describe the sorrowful leave-taking of Kate and Amy with their very loving friends at Yarramundoc, nor shall I give details of the tedious journey to Gippsland: suffice it to say, that all the difficulties by the way were surmounted. Walter and his wife and children and Amy, together with their faithful servants Jem and Molly, arrived safely at the journey's end; and they soon began to be busy in their several vocations in the new homestead. There was plenty of work for each one to do, and they were all able and willing to do their part, and there was no complaining to be heard in their midst.

Walter's capital was not sufficient to stock his new station, after the large outlay for building and fencing and his removal expenses; but he met with a good friend in a Sydney merchant, who generously offered to lend him any money he needed, at a low rate of interest, and also to supply him with stores for his station,

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until he could get a return from the sale of fat cattle off his run. In addition to all the other advantages which Walter as a young beginner had to cheer and encourage him, the season was highly favourable for graziers, and there was an abundance of grass and water.

I shall now leave Walter and his united household to go on their prosperous way, and will, in my next chapter, give a brief account of the progress of Kate's young brothers, since she left them in England.

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CHAPTER XXXIII.

"But the jingling of the guinea helps the heart that honour feels."
—*Tennyson.*

FRED and Harry Maysen had promised their sisters and Walter that they would use their best efforts to advance in their several studies, and they hoped that in a few years they might make their way over to Australia together. They seemed properly to estimate the advantageous positions in which they were placed—Fred being an apprentice in one of the most noted engineering establishments in London, and Harry a pupil in one of the best foundation schools in the kingdom. They each promised to write periodically, and give a faithful account of their progress. Their letters were always looked for by their fond sisters and Walter with much interest, and the reports they contained were usually of a pleasing kind.

Harry found a stanch friend in Mr. Moore, one of the partners in the firm that his late father had worked for; and through the influence and help of that benevolent gentleman, he was enabled after awhile to matriculate at Cambridge University. In due course he got a B.A. degree; and not long afterwards he took holy orders, and was appointed to a curacy in one of the eastern parishes of London.

Soon after Fred's term of apprenticeship expired, he fancied that a change into the country would be pleasant;

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so he got a job to assist in erecting some millworks in Somersetshire, and there he began to save a little money. When that job was ended he returned to London, and treated himself to a few weeks' profitable recreation, in viewing some of the treasures of the Great Exhibition of 1851. About that time there was an agitation among the iron trades of England, which perhaps many tradesmen have cause to remember to this day. I will very briefly explain the main origin of that long-continued strike, as it was told to me. Ten hours were then estimated as a working day (the present eight hours' system was not even dreamt of), but some men were working twelve or even fifteen hours a day, and were paid overtime at the rate of one and a quarter to one and a half day's pay. Partly perhaps to check the disposition of the masters to give over-work, and partly with a desire to get the most they could for their labour, the men proposed to charge equal to two hours' pay for one hour of overtime. The masters resisted the proposal, and the men refused to yield; a lock-out was the result, after giving one week's notice.

The masters then combined, and refused to employ any man who would not sign an agreement not to be a member of any trade society. Some men signed, and went to work again; others stood out, and were left to shift for themselves. A few men emigrated; others stayed at home and got help from the funds of the "Amalgamated Society of Ironworkers," which was formed years before, and was financially strong. Fred Maysen did not take an active part in the agitation, and he would have gone to work for his old employers if he could have done so peaceably, but he was compelled to join with the men on strike—or so he stated in his letter to Kate on the subject. I need not try to

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explain how or why he was thus forced to throw himself out of work, nor will I stop to comment on the anomaly of an intelligent, able young mechanic submitting to any such dictatorship; I state as a gloomy fact, that thus it was with Fred Maysen, and with many other workmen quite as steady and able as himself,—they were compelled to waste their time.

At that crisis, a gentleman in London, well known for his literary talents and his philanthropic spirit, a late Member of Parliament, and a distinguished lawyer, Mr. T. H——. I refrain from giving his name in full, lest it might displease him. That gentleman, out of sympathy for the many engineers then out of work, induced a wise and generous friend of his, Mr. V——, to help some of them to emigrate to Australia. Twenty-two men, some single and some married, were selected. They were known to be good workmen—what is termed by the trade "all-round men." None were chosen but steady, respectable men, but there was no objection made or preference given to men of any particular country or creed. No doubt they were all glad at their good fortune in meeting with such liberal-hearted friends—any way, Fred was thankful when he was chosen as one of the emigrating party.

I can only give a mere glance at the results of that benevolent scheme in my present work; but I have facts enough within my reach to make a volume in itself, of the upward progress and usefulness of several of those engineers, who were helped in that wise and liberal manner. I might relate much from my own personal observation that would gladden the hearts of the originators of that happy movement. It is not often that a capitalist has loaned out a few hundred pounds to better advantage, or that has yielded such

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cheering harvests of moral and social good, in a generation or so. Altogether one hundred souls, including the wives and children of the married men, embarked at London in a first-class ship, and arrived safely at Sydney in October, 1852. On the eve of their departure from London, a dinner was given to the engineers by Messrs. T. H—— and V——, who were present and gave some useful advice to their attentive audience.

The money advanced by Mr. V—— for that novel emigration scheme was £1,200. He did not charge any interest, but he stipulated that the principal should be repaid to him within a reasonable time. Each emigrant made himself personally responsible for the repayment, which was to be made by easy instalments. I may here state that the money was eventually repaid to Mr. V——; and I believe that a handsome piece of plate was sent to him by the grateful party. But if I might be permitted to tell him and his good friend Mr. T. H—— all that I know about the promising sons and daughters of some of those persons they so kindly helped—a goodly band of intelligent young Australians, who are growing up bright ornaments of the land of their fathers' adoption—I am sure those gentlemen would rejoice tenfold more over the good news than they would do over the richest presentation of silver or gold.

Some of those engineer emigrants and their sons, I have the honour of claiming amongst my most respected and trusty friends in Australia; and others that I am not personally intimate with, I know, by their good reputation and useful works, as men of mark in the land. Not less than half of the twenty-two selected have turned out "good men and true," and are filling useful positions in Sydney and elsewhere, and some of

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them are wealthy men. Glad indeed shall I be if this short notice of an unostentatious act of brotherly kindness should influence some other English capitalist of a similar liberal spirit, to invest a little of his money in the same practical way—to follow the kind example of Mr. T. H—— and Mr. V—— in helping some of his struggling fellow-men to rise in the world. I would not, however, advise him to send another large party of mechanics to Sydney at present, but he might safely send agriculturists of the steady sort, for there are many millions of acres of land still unoccupied. It seems very hard to me that English farm labourers, in general, should have no better prospect for the dreary winter of their life, when they are unable to work, than the union house. I wish some large-hearted ladies or gentlemen would try to mend the condition of a valuable class of society, either by emigration or by some other wise and efficient method.* I fear there is not sufficient inducement for able-bodied young men to remain in England as farmers' workmen; and the remedy is worthy of grave consideration.

> "Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
> Where wealth accumulates and men decay,
> Princes and lords may flourish or may fade,
> A breath can make them as a breath has made;
> But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
> When once destroyed can never be supplied."

Fred Maysen got employment at his trade a few days after he landed in Sydney, and at more than double the wages that he had received in London, which was a very encouraging beginning for him. He deposited all the

* Since the above remarks were penned, an emigration or colonization scheme on a grand scale has been successfully initiated by Mr. Thomas Hughes, of Rugby school celebrity.

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money he had in the savings bank; and as he added to it monthly, he soon had a convenient little reserve fund, yielding current interest. His practical remarks on the wisdom or expediency of every young man opening an account at a savings bank are worthy of being printed in capital letters, and I wish I could quote them correctly. He was rather shy of beginning a bank account with the small amount of cash that he had in hand, but he conquered his pride; and to that manly resolution he partly attributes his after-success. He determined to add to his fund each month, and the wish to avoid taking a paltry-looking sum to the bank helped to make him careful of his expenditure, and perhaps saved him from acquiring habits of extravagance or intemperance, to which some Australian workmen are unfortunately addicted.

Fred soon won the confidence of his employers, who were one of the largest firms in Sydney, and he would perhaps have gained a good position amongst their workmen had he continued in their service; but acting on the advice of his brother-in-law, seconded by the entreaties of his loving sisters, who wished him to be nearer to them, he removed to Melbourne, after about two years' experience in Sydney. Walter Thompson had then been several years established at Gippsland, which had became part of the new colony of Victoria. He was very prosperous as a grazier, and had considerably extended his cattle run. He was also a Member of Parliament for one of the Victorian electorates, consequently a man of influence in the colony.

Fred is not the only man in Australia who has felt the advantage of having a relative in a good social position. Without wishing to dispute the proposition, that any intelligent young mechanic may reasonably

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hope to make onward progress in Australia, or elsewhere, by his own industrious efforts, I have no doubt that it might materially smooth his way up the incline to success, if he had an influential friend who was willing to give him an encouraging push now and then. Fred soon got into a "Government billet," as it is commonly called, and one that promised to suit him admirably. Walter was too honourable a man to use his political influence unfairly. He got Fred an appointment on some Government engineering works, believing that he was competent to fill the important office usefully. I dare say the fact that his brother-in-law was a member of the Government helped certain officials in the department to discern Fred's capabilities more clearly than they would have done had he been a "new chum" without any friend in the land, and their approval was naturally stimulating to Fred's genius. He was a clever young man at his trade, as I have before stated, and he continued to be most persevering in his mathematical studies. His talents and energy after awhile attracted the notice of a gentleman who was the head of a large manufactory in Melbourne, and he made Fred an offer which he accepted, for it was too good to be slighted even for a snug Government billet. His new master, Mr. King, had great mercantile tact and judgment, and withal he was a gentleman of a most urbane and generous nature. He had risen to a position of wealth and influence in Sydney and Melbourne, through his own industry and talent, for he brought no capital with him when he first arrived in Australia. Fred soon had cause to think himself fortunate in finding a master who showed such a cheering appreciation of the honest efforts of his *employés*, and such an unselfish desire to pay every man fair and liberal wages for his work. It

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is not unlikely that Mr. King had some men amongst the large number that he employed who did not properly estimate his generous "live and let live" spirit, and who would dawdle their time away if they could manage it, but he had very satisfactory proofs in his increasing trade and wealth, that on the whole his men worked well and did him justice; and he had little or no inconvenience from strikes, which had now and then caused some other manufacturers in the city to temporarily close their works. Mr. King's successful experience is a pleasing example of the correctness of the axiom, that "good masters make good men."

After Fred had been a few years in Mr. King's employ, he was commissioned to go to England to select certain new machinery for the factory, which was a further proof of the confidence his master had in his ability and judgment. He went home by mail steamer, and it was a real holiday treat for him. It is not necessary for me to follow him about, nor to describe all his operations, I will merely say that he managed the important business he had in hand satisfactorily; and as he always travelled about with his eyes open and his head free from any bemuddling influences, he picked up much useful knowledge, which he had wisdom enough to jot into his note-book from time to time, for after-consideration and digestion; and he combined business with pleasure in judicious proportions.

During Fred's stay in London he made his home with his brother, who had comfortable apartments in the home of one of his parishioners, not far from the West India Docks. Fred's arrival was opportune, for Harry was in a rather critical state of health, and nothing was more likely to help his case than the intelligent counsel and sympathy of a loving brother—one who was strong, and

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willing to "support the weak." At his first meeting with Harry, Fred was concerned at the poor fellow's nervous and debilitated appearance; but he wisely refrained from making any remark which might distress him, and he tried to find out the cause of his brother's infirm condition. It was not long a mystery to Fred. On the third day after his arrival, he went home early in the afternoon to get Harry to go out for a half-holiday, but found that he was gone on his daily course of pastoral visitation. The landlady, who was the wife of a respectable mechanic, with many preliminary apologies for seeming to meddle with her young pastor's affairs, told Fred that she was anxious to speak to him about his brother's weak condition, and that her husband had resolved to tell the rector about it next Sunday. Fred thanked her for her kind consideration for his brother, and begged her to tell him all she knew of the cause of his infirmity. Thus encouraged, Mrs. Price, with genuine feeling, gave Fred a lengthy account of Harry's sufferings and privations during the two years that he had lived in her house; and which I shall explain in two sentences. She evidently thought that her young pastor was overworked, and that he did not take sufficient nourishing food. She very delicately hinted that she feared his income was not sufficient to keep him in that large parish, where there were so many appeals to his funds from the poor and the sick—appeals which his kind heart could not resist; in short, she knew that he gave away more money than he could afford, and thus he debarred himself of the nutriment which was needful to sustain his strength under his continuous bodily and mental exertions.

That evening happened to be one of the two evenings which Harry had in each week for preparing his

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sermons; so after tea Fred took the opportunity to speak to his brother about his affairs in general. He did it so tenderly, and with such earnestness, that poor Harry could not but feel thankful. With tears in his eyes, he replied, as he leaned affectionately on his strong brother's shoulder, "You are the first man, dear Fred, who has noticed my weak state of health, or who has offered me a word of sympathy. I feel your kindness more than I can express—it is warming up my heart, which I think was getting dead cold. This is a large parish, and of late I have began to feel that my work is too much for me. Sometimes I think I have missed my way in life; that I am not fit for my sacred office; and you can have no idea how depressed I get because I see little or no good resulting from my exhausting labours. Making sermons has become a real trouble to me, though at one time I used to enjoy that part of my study work. I seem to have lost all originality of thought or idea, and my brain begins to ache whenever I take up a pen to write. Just let me read you the sermon I preached last Sunday evening, as the newest specimen of my mental powers. Here it is—only a short affair."

"Excuse me, Harry, but don't read it just now; give it to me," said Fred, as he took the manuscript and put it into his pocket. "You have had enough of it, old boy! I'll read it myself, by-and-by."

"But my pulpit work is not the hardest part of my duty, though that is discouraging, for people often go to sleep while I preach—and no wonder, you will perhaps say, Fred, when you read my specimen sermon. It is the visitation among the sick and afflicted in the lanes and alleys of my parish that most distresses me. The suffering and poverty that I am an eye-witness to from day to day is completely unnerving me. Look here!"

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continued he, and he jerked his empty pocket inside out, "that is the way I come home almost every day; and the mere trifle of money that I can dole out from my limited means is but like a drop in the ocean of misery that surrounds me. O God! do have pity on the poor and needy in my parish!"

"I think you have done too much in the way of visiting in the homes of your poor parishioners, Harry. Your nervous system cannot bear it. That is clear enough to me," said Fred, feelingly.

"Done too much, brother! Oh don't say that again!" sobbed Harry. "I am sure I have done too little, but my strength is not equal to a greater effort. I wish you would go with me for a day or two, and see but a few of the sad cases that I can show you in my parish—not amongst thieves or other disreputable characters, as some persons think all the residents of alleys must be, but poor aged folks, who are as honest as our dear father and mother were, and they are almost in a state of starvation."

"It must be distressing to you to be constantly seeing such cases, Harry, and I don't wonder at your feeling low-spirited. I should not like to see them at present; but I will agree to go with you for a day or so in your rounds of visitation, on condition that you first go with me for a week or two. Now stop a bit, brother, and hear what I have to say—don't tell me it is impossible, I cannot believe in such a word. I have to go to Manchester and Liverpool, and then to Glasgow, on business; and if you will go with me, I can combine a good deal of pleasure with my business, and I am sure the trip will benefit you."

Harry showed many reasons why the thing was impracticable; but Fred, in a pleasant way, argued away

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all his objections, and would not let him say anything about the financial part of it. Finally it was decided that they should start on the ensuing Thursday. Harry wished to stay till Monday, but Fred protested against his preaching any more sermons until he had taken his holiday; and he wound up the discussion by quoting from Wordsworth's "Tables Turned,"—

> "Up, up, my friend! and quit your books,
> Or surely you'll grow double;
> Up, up, my friend! and clear your looks;
> Why all this toil and trouble?"

I wish that every overworked parson or literary toiler in London and elsewhere had such a considerate brother as Fred Maysen—one who had a heart to feel, and the means to give a practical turn to his sympathy. At the end of three weeks Harry returned from his pleasant country tour, with his health decidedly improved, and he resumed his official duties with fresh spirit and energy. Soon afterwards Fred called upon the rector of the parish, and had a long conversation respecting his brother's position. The rector was a kind, feeling man, and it was pretty evident that he was almost as much overworked as his young curate. The object of Fred's conference with him was not to ask for Harry a decrease of work or an increase of salary, but for his aid in getting a removal for him from London to Victoria. There was less difficulty in the way than Fred expected. The rector said he highly valued his exemplary young colleague, but he was sure a change of climate would benefit his health. He would help him to go away, and would write to the Bishop of Melbourne in his behalf.

After Fred's encouraging interview with the rector, he named the subject to Harry. At first he positively declined to go away from his present sphere of work;

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but in a few days he was induced to change his mind, and the idea of living near to his beloved sisters was a stimulus to his efforts to get ready to start with Fred a month hence.

In fulfilment of his promise, Fred went one day with Harry to visit some of his poor parishioners; and he had ocular proofs of the correctness of his brother's feeling description of the wretchedness of the inmates of those homes, in the densely populated parts of London East. In a back room of a house up a smoky alley was an old blind man, who was also crippled in his legs from rheumatism. He told a little of his sad story of poverty and suffering. He also said that he had a son in Australia, at one of the gold-fields, but he could not tell the exact locality, for he had not heard from him for years. Fred took down the name of the old man's son, and promised to try to find him, and appeal to his manliness in behalf of his poor afflicted father.

About four months afterwards, Fred and Harry arrived in Melbourne; and the day after they landed, they went together to Gippsland. All I need say about the meeting of the long-separated brothers and sisters is that it was warm and loving, and they were all thankful that they were again a united family. Harry spent a few weeks very pleasantly in riding about the country with his sisters and Walter, and in visiting their numerous friends in the neighbourhood; and then he returned to Melbourne to resume his ministerial work.

The Bishop of Melbourne received Harry kindly, and very soon he was sent as pastor, *pro tem.*, to one of the large gold-fields to the north of the capital. Fred's management of his important business errand to England gave great satisfaction to his employer; and shortly after his return, he was taken into the firm as junior partner.

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CHAPTER XXXIV.

"When one is contented, there is no more to be desired; and when there is no more to be desired, there is an end of it."—*Don Quixote.*

IF health and liberty are the greatest natural blessings mankind is capable of enjoying, and few persons will dispute the position, then of all occupations I think that of the Australian grazier, or squatter, is the most desirable. The first line in an old song says,—

"Some love to roam o'er the dark sea foam, where the shrill wind whistles free."

Let them go to sea who will, say I, "but a life in the woods for me." I have travelled over more than a hundred thousand miles of salt water, and have almost had enough of it. There is less romance in "a life on the ocean wave" than there was to my young fancy fifty years ago. If I were beginning life again, and were free to choose my future occupation, I would be a squatter in Australia, even though I had to go into the remote back-woods, or bush, to select my cattle or sheep runs. It is to my mind the most independent of all callings. It is a healthful and an active one, and it affords boundless scope for intelligent efforts, in improving the breed and condition of flocks and herds; and surely it must be a useful employment to provide good cheap food for

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humankind! Any old Australian colonist, who has paid a shilling or fifteen pence a pound for his beef steaks or mutton chops, as I have done of late, cannot fail to have his ideas of the importance of Australian pastoral affairs enlarged and exalted.

A few days ago I noticed, with peculiar interest, the longing mouths of some of the English peasants in my present locality, when I read to them an extract from a late Sydney newspaper, showing that the surplus beef and mutton in New South Wales, available for export, in the year 1880, is over two hundred millions of pounds; and it can be sold at a profit by the graziers for two-pence a pound. It will be a wonderful boon to the population of Great Britain, when a large supply of fresh meat can be sent over from Australia, and sold at a reasonable price. Many poor folks are hoping that the desirable boon is not far off. They are getting tired of eating cheese and bacon, and fresh beef or mutton they can only afford to partake of on rare occasions, as a holiday treat. One cargo of good sound meat has arrived in London from Sydney, and that has demonstrated the practicability of carrying fresh meat from the antipodes, in a frozen state; and it has also proved that folks in England are not hindered by foolish prejudice from enjoying cheap food, that is perfectly fresh and good—prime fat beef and mutton, the carcasses of beasts that were fed on natural grasses.

All honour to the memory of the late Mr. Thomas Sutcliffe Mort, of Sydney, for his persevering experiments in saving meat fresh by refrigeratory process. He spared no expense and no personal efforts to perfect his useful designs; and though unfortunately he did not live to reap a pecuniary recompense for his anxious labours, millions of the human family will be benefited

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by his enterprise and his unsparing outlay; and also by the helpful co-operation of his scientific partner, Mr. Nicolle. The names of those gentlemen will ever be remembered in Australian history, as public benefactors.

I have before stated that Walter Thompson selected good runs, with an abundance of feed for his cattle and a never-failing supply of water. When he could take almost the pick of the district of Gippsland, he would indeed have been lacking in sound judgment had he made a bad selection. But some persons, even when they had an almost unlimited tract of unoccupied country before them, have not shown carefulness in their selection of runs for their sheep or cattle, and consequently they have not been very successful as graziers. A good run is perhaps as essential to the success of a squatter as a good position in a city is for a tradesman or shopkeeper; and a man is not very wise who would squat down with either sheep or cattle on land that he had not previously ridden over, to assure himself of the fattening qualities of the feed and the permanent supply of water.

A clever young chemist once told me, that just before beginning business for himself in Sydney, he was in a sort of dilemma, for he had two shops offered to him in the main street, the one north and the other south of an important cross street. He was inclined to take the southern shop, as it was a larger one than the other, and the rents were about equal; but he had a doubt whether the main current of pedestrian traffic set in that direction. In order to help him to a safe decision, he employed a man for a week to stand in a convenient spot, and count the passengers as they turned out of the cross street, which was a busy thoroughfare, and to note which way

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they went. By that common-sense test the young chemist found that by far the greater number of persons turned northward, so he took the shop on the north side of the cross street, and he is now doing an excellent trade. Very likely he will make a fortune in his shop, for he is a sagacious young man and very attentive to business.

Doubtless there are worries and trials in every condition of life; from the highest to the lowest in station, each man and woman has a share of trouble and inconvenience. It has been said, that earthly good is pretty equally distributed in the human family, and perhaps the saying is correct; still, I have met with some poor sufferers who declared that they had more than a common share of the ills of life, and they could not think that they were personally accountable for their unequal lot. Carlyle says, "The most unhappy of all men is the man that cannot tell what he is going to do, that has got no work cut out for him in the world." Walter Thompson no doubt had enough of trouble in some shape or other, still he was a prosperous man, and he perhaps had a full average share of happiness. He tried to "guide his affairs with discretion," and he had a loving helper in his wife. "She looked well to the ways of her household," and their home was a peaceful one.

More than twenty years have gone by since Walter first settled in Gippsland, and he is now past the meridian of life. Many changes have occurred in the condition of all the persons whom I have mentioned in the course of this story, and "some have gone from earth for ever." I will briefly notice the positions of the survivors, when I last heard of them, though I feel sorry to take leave of such interesting friends.

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Walter was a rich man. The gold discovery in Victoria induced an amazing influx of people from all parts of the world, and the value of Walter's cattle, and also of his stations, increased very much. He was, as I before stated, a Member of the Victorian Parliament, and also a magistrate of the territory. He likewise took a leading part in many of the social reform movements in that progressive young colony, and he was well known and generally esteemed. Two of his sons are now members of a learned profession in Melbourne; two of his daughters are married to good husbands, and he has still one young daughter at home, to cheer and comfort him and his devoted wife for awhile longer, until some lucky man can persuade her to go and cheer his home for life.

Amy Maysen, soon after she left Yarramundoc, was sent to a good school in Sydney, and after four years' careful tuition she went to live with her sister at Maysenville, the name that Walter gave to his head station at Gippsland. As she matured into womanhood, her amiable disposition and her retiring, modest demeanour made her a general favourite. More than one young gentleman in the district longed for the honour of her hand, but she was not in haste to change her condition. She was contented in her sister's home, and her darling nephews were her most favoured lovers. She was sometimes quizzically told that she was "getting on the old maids' list," and "was losing her chance." She did not show that she was displeased at that popular banter, though she perhaps questioned the kind feeling or the politeness of the persons who made such remarks to her. Certainly in her case, as it doubtless is the case with many other respectable damsels, it was not for want of offers that she remained single so long, but from a choice which

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every girl has a right to exercise in that very important personal matter. I never could see any real wit in the jokes that unmarried women, who are past girlhood, are often subjected to. If they are single because they have not received an eligible offer of marriage, surely they cannot reasonably be blamed or jeered at for the obtuseness or unloveableness of mankind around them! No modest young woman would try to persuade a man to marry her, if he did not make her an offer. After some years of "single blessedness," as she called it, Amy gave her hand and heart to a man who was in every way worthy of such a prize. He has a large cattle station not many miles from Maysenville. He is a moderately wealthy man, and of high family connections; but what is of more importance to Amy, he is a man of high Christian principle—a gentleman. She is now the mother of six beautiful children. Walter's playful prediction, that Amy would one day be a rich lady, has come to pass. In her exaltation she does not wholly forget the time when she was very poor, and her hand and purse are always open to the calls of suffering humanity around her.

The Rev. Henry Maysen (it is hardly proper to call him Harry now) spent about two years as a sort of missionary on the populous gold-fields about Castlemaine. It was to him a wonderful change from his routine in one of the poorest parishes of London; and the contrast between the lavish or wasteful expenditure of the gold-diggers, in those days when almost every man was finding gold, and the abject poverty of some of his late parishioners, was at first quite shocking to the young pastor's sensitive nature. But by degrees he got used to his exciting surroundings, and his health was much benefited by his frequent exercise on horseback. "The labour we delight in physics pain."

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Harry threw his heart and energies into his ministerial work, and he had many cheering proofs that his labours were not in vain. After awhile, the Bishop of Melbourne removed Harry to a metropolitan parish. There he was introduced to some good society, a privilege he had not much enjoyed in his country life. He was a genteel-looking young man; and if there was a slight rusticity noticeable in his manners, it is not to be wondered at; but it soon wore off, and he became as easy and graceful in his deportment as if he had been used to refined society all his days. Not long after his appointment to the city curacy, Harry fell in love with a young lady, the only daughter of one of his wealthy parishioners. It was some time before he could summon courage to propose to a young lady so much above him in birth, but when he did so she accepted him, with a readiness which proved to him that she reciprocated his warm attachment. After a reasonably lengthy courtship, they were married, and Harry was appointed incumbent of a parish not very far from Maysenville, where he is now living.

Fred Maysen is in a large way of business in Victoria, and is gradually growing rich. He is still single; but if current rumour be correct, he will soon be married to a young lady, who is both amiable and wealthy. Harry slily told Fred the other day, that he had shown his engineering tact in waiting till he had worked himself into a position to aspire to the hand of a lady, who moved in the upper circles of society, and who had a fortune in her own right. If Fred's life be spared, the world will hear more about him a few years hence, for he is a remarkably clever mechanic—quite an inventive genius, and a diligent student. Moreover, he is a sincere Christian, and the influence of his example cannot fail

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to benefit many persons around him. He is a model master, and is beloved and respected by all his *employés*. He has filled some offices of importance in the municipality in which he resides, and perhaps he will, by-and-by, be exalted to a seat in Parliament, for men such as he are seldom overlooked.

I have before alluded to Mr. Bonner's dutiful attention to his sister, and his frequent visits to her at Yarramundoc during the first few months of her residence there. He kept his growing love for Emma Wilton a secret—or he fancied that he did so, and he did not make a confession of it to any one. But love always will show itself in some tender way or other. Miss Bonner understood the condition of her brother's heart; and though she had no sly matchmaking designs, she was helping him in the honest way that loving sisters often quietly advance their young brothers' interests. She was very fond of Horace; so it was only natural for her to speak of him approvingly, and to be pleased to hear any one else notice his good qualities. After awhile, she could perceive that Emma Wilton was getting fond of Horace, and then she thought it was her duty to speak to him on the subject, and advise him not to come so often to Yarramundoc, lest Mr. and Mrs. Wilton might fancy that his company would distract Emma's mind too much from her school studies. "Besides, dear Horace," she softly added, "you are not in a position to aspire to the hand of Miss Wilton. You are only a farmer, you know."

"Only a farmer!" responded Horace, with honest dignity of tone. "Pray what profession or calling or trade in the world is more ancient or more honourable than a farmer's, sister? And isn't Mr. Wilton himself a farmer?"

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"But he is a gentleman farmer."

"I hope I am a gentleman too, sister; and our family is as respectable as Mr. Wilton's, so far as I can judge."

"Yes; but Mr. Wilton is moderately rich, and you are poor. That makes a wonderful difference, Horace."

"It's true enough that I am comparatively poor, and I don't expect to be very rich if I continue to be an agricultural or a dairy farmer; still I do hope to be able, by-and-by, to keep a wife in a comfortable way; and I would rather be on a farm than be in a city counting-house, or warehouse, or law court. Mr. Wilton cannot reasonably object to me personally, or to my family connections, and I don't think he will object on account of my pecuniary condition, for I have heard him say that he had very little capital when he left England for this colony; and he worked his way up in the world. I love Emma Wilton dearly, and I mean to ask her father's permission to court her."

"Well, take my advice, Horace. Wait a little longer before you ask him. When Emma has done with the schoolroom, you will have a better chance of success; and I shall then perhaps be able to help your suit on more effectually than I could do now, for I shall be in a more independent position."

Horace took his sister's judicious advice. He waited till Emma had finished her education, and then he asked her father for permission to pay his addresses to her. It was cordially given. Horace wooed the dear maid of his heart's first choice. She favoured his suit, and he was the happiest young farmer on the Shining River. There were not many ruffling influences in the course of their true love. Millions of honest-hearted couples have lived and loved together, and have passed off the stage

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of life, without having anything printed about their domestic joys and sorrows, or their home virtues and failings. I shall not say much more about Horace and Emma than that after a reasonable season of courtship they were married, and they settled down on the farm at Yarramundoc. About the same time, Mr. and Mrs. Wilton gave up farming, and went to live at Newcastle-on-Hunter, for the advantage of the sea air and good medical aid, which the failing health of Mr. Wilton required. A few years ago, they both died in the same week.

Horace and Emma are a contented pair; and though they are not likely to grow rich by cultivating the impoverished soil of their farm, they make more than sufficient for their wants, and they have sound health, and hearts free from the anxiety which is usually inseparable from ambitious climbing. Horace is a good practical farmer, and Emma makes him an excellent wife. He thinks she is as near as can be to perfection in every department of her household, from the dairy to the drawing-room. She has an equally high opinion of his merits, and they are happy together.

* * * * *

This morning I read a short paragraph in a newspaper as follows:—"In a park near Manchester is a statue of Mr. Joseph Brotherton, formerly a Member of Parliament, which has the following inscription: 'My wealth consists, not in the largeness of my income, but in the smallness of my wants.' There are not many of our public monuments that bear so noble a record. In this inscription is contained some of the grandest philosophy of life, and a lesson which cannot be too widely appreciated." I remember being struck with

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that inscription, when I was on a visit to Manchester a year or two ago. I made a note of it at the time, but I lost it. I am glad that I have found it this morning; and lest I should lose it again, I will put it into this book, for it expresses a principle which I have since tried to study, in a practical way, and I wish to recommend it.

A few days before Miss Bonner left Yarramundoc, to go home and prepare for her wedding, she and her young pupils were taking their usual afternoon walk. The girls were rather depressed at the prospect of soon losing their governess, who had been such an agreeable companion for the last two years, and Jenny remarked in a mock-angry tone, "If that great tall squatter friend of yours, Miss Bonner, had not come on a visit to our house a year ago, we should not be now grieving at having to part with you next Friday. I suppose our loss will be your gain, as they say on the tombstones; but I do almost wish there was a law made to punish men who come wheedling into happy homes, and coax the best girls they can find to marry them, and then go away—anywhere they like to carry them. Such wicked roguery as that should——"

"Oh, do look yonder!" interrupted Emma; "whoever is that oddity?"

"He is somebody who never rode a horse before, I should think," said Jenny. "Ha, ha! isn't he an interesting-looking figure? I wish I had my drawing pencil. He ought to have asked his sister to pin him to the saddle before he left home."

The object of their merriment was a young man on a tall horse. His toes were pointed out square with the horse's ears, and his elbows were working like steam pumps; the bumping up and down in the saddle had

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caused his trousers to ruffle up over the tops of his boots in a very undignified fashion. No one could for a moment doubt that he was a sailor, even if his nautical style of dress had not proclaimed it. He did not see his quizzical observers, who were some distance off in the bush, or he would perhaps not have held by one hand to the pommel of the saddle. He jogged along the main road until he came to the gateway to Yarramundoc, when he sprang off his horse, opened the gate, and then mounted again with surprising agility.

"Why, I declare he is going to our house! Whatever can he want there?" said Emma.

"Perhaps he wants to sell his horse, for he looks tired of him," replied Jenny, laughing. "Well, if he can't ride gracefully, he can jump like a circus monkey; I'll say that much for him, whoever he is."

The young horseman who had so excited the comical fancies of the girls was Mr. Rogers, formerly midshipman of the *Nautilus*, of whom I have made brief mention in my fifth and fifteenth chapters. A few weeks previously he had arrived in Port Jackson, as chief mate of a large Liverpool clipper ship. He wrote to Mr. Wilton, telling him, in a modest, manly way, that he had for several years past cherished a fondness for Miss Jenny; and he asked for leave to declare his love to her. Mr. and Mrs. Wilton, after carefully considering the matter, had decided to invite Mr. Rogers to Yarramundoc before they gave any definite answer to his request. He had not been slow in accepting their kind invitation. They did not tell any one that they expected a visitor, so the surprise of the girls was quite natural, when they returned home, to find that the clumsy rider whom they had so freely quizzed was the young sailor that they had so often admired when on board the *Nautilus*, for his cool

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bravery in times of danger. They were really glad to see him again. Time had wrought its usual changes in him, since the day that Jenny first saw him on the quarter-deck of his ship, and he had somewhat aroused her maidenly pride by his nautical joking. Then, he was a smooth-faced lad of sixteen, but now he was developed into a well-built, full-whiskered young man; and no doubt he saw a charming difference in Jenny's appearance, for she was a handsome young woman.

The "old, old story" of honest love, courtship, and marriage has been told times out of number, and will be told again and again, with endless variations. The story always has been interesting to some persons concerned, and it naturally will be so to the end of time. Merry, romping, happy Jenny Wilton had laughed and sighed and said funny things over the news of the engagements, and then over the wedding-cards of many of the young playmates of her childhood, and at length her turn came to be courted and married, and carried away from her father's home, amidst showers of happy tears and rice and old slippers, in a coach with a loving husband beside her. I should like to be able to give all reasonable particulars of Jenny's experiences in that way, and I am loth to take leave of her abruptly, for I love the dear, kind-hearted girl. It would be pleasant work for me to tell, in tender words, of her peculiar heart-fluttering, when her sailor lover pressed the engagement ring on her finger, and of her varied natural feelings, up to the grand wedding triumph; and her softened joy the next day at seeing the announcement in the newspapers of the marriage of Captain Daniel Rogers to Miss Jane Wilton. All that would be interesting, no doubt; but my tale has almost reached the designed limits, so

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my additional report of Jenny's experience must be brief.

Mr. Rogers stayed a week at Yarramundoc; and it will be judged that he made good use of his time when I state that on the first day of his visit he obtained Mr. and Mrs. Wilton's consent to his suit, and he heard from Jenny's own pretty, truthful lips the thrilling admission that she loved him dearly. No doubt he went back to his ship with his breast glowing with love, and pleasant anticipations of bliss in a wedded life by-and-by; and recollections of that happy week at Yarramundoc, helped to cheer him up and keep his heart warm on his long homeward voyage. About twelve months afterwards, Mr. Rogers returned to Sydney as captain of the fine clipper ship *Morning Star*. He then married Jenny, and took her away to sea with him. She went a second voyage, and then she settled down in a home on shore. She would still like to go to sea with her beloved husband, but it would not be expedient to take her three children with her, and she would not leave them at home for all the world. Laughing, lively Jenny has become quite a staid, thoughtful-looking matron. Her husband says she is one of the best wives that ever lived, quite a treasure.

Molly, the half-caste girl, whom Kate and Amy took so much pains to civilize, remained in the family for several years. She was very handy in every department of domestic work, but she was most valuable as a nurse. When Molly was with the children, Kate never had any fear for their safety. Amy taught her to read and write; and many visitors to Maysenville have been struck with Molly's smart, intelligent appearance—a sort of living rebuke to those persons who unfeelingly assert that the aborigines of Australia are incapable of moral or social

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improvement. Honest Jem Brown made several attempts to persuade Molly to marry him; but she loved her master and mistress and their children too well to leave them, even for a home of her own and a white husband. When the New Land Bill was passed, however, Jem was one of the first "Free Selectors," and he set up farming on his own account, for he had saved a little money. Walter and Kate and Amy then used their joint influence to persuade Molly to marry Jem, for they felt sure he would make her a good husband.

On a Christmas Day, not long ago, there was a large festive gathering at Maysenville, including Harry and Amy and their families, and Fred with his betrothed. It was a right merry party, and it required a large room to entertain them all. As they were seated at a sumptuous dessert, comprising a variety of the fruits then in season, Fred, in his old quizzical way, called across the table to his brother, "I say, Harry! do you remember lying in bed one night, many years ago, and disturbing my slumbers by whining, 'Katie shan't go away! Katie shan't go away!' Ha, ha! what a little softie you were for trying to stop her! Why, if she had not gone away from home as a pioneer, it is highly probable that you and I would be on the frosty side of the world to-day, and where would all these dear boys and girls be? Ay, and where would brother Walter have found such a loving, helpful wife?"

"But don't you also remember, Fred, telling me at the same time, that all the inhabitants of this country were dreadful savages?" retorted Harry, with a comical glance at the beautiful, smiling girl at Fred's side.

"Ha, ha! I was a little savage myself then," said Fred, "but time has altered us all, you know, Harry: I never

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hear you cry now. Well, let bygones be bygones; and as it is my turn to give a toast," he added, rising up, "I propose Prosperity to Australia, the good land of our adoption; and may we as a united family do our part towards making it, what it is ere long destined to be, *The greatest Empire of the Southern World.*"

FINIS.

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APPENDIX.

The following extract is from a report of the *Sydney Mail*, of 28th February, 1880, of a deputation consisting of about a dozen gentlemen—clergymen, Members of Parliament, and others—who waited upon the Premier of New South Wales, to urge upon the Government the necessity for doing something to ameliorate the condition of the aborigines of the colony.

"Mr. Palmer (the secretary) read an exhaustive report respecting the condition of the Maloga mission, and the work carried on there by Mr. Matthews."

"Rev. Dr. Steel said it gave him great pleasure to support this matter; we had been far too careless of the people from whom we took this land. Many of them had passed away, and those that remained were few and far between. There was a special interest attaching to those that remained, by reason of the mixture of our own blood with them. It was a matter of the deepest grief to him when he saw so many so nearly allied to us, growing up in the same neglect and immorality as their fathers, and perhaps much worse. It seemed to him that the country, or the Government, ought to secure these people the right to a certain portion of the land somewhere as a home, and make such provision as would enable them to practise industry. We ought also to secure them some measure of education, and he was persuaded that they were as capable of being instructed as any of the youth of the colony. As the Government were preparing an education measure, he thought one of its provisions should be to secure

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some education for the younger portion of the aborigines, and a place should be set apart where they might learn some industrial arts. He would earnestly entreat the Premier to urge upon the Government to do something for this decaying race, that there may be at least some of their posterity taking part in this great country, and some of them joining with us in the glory and happiness of the kingdom of heaven."

"Mr. Matthews gave a brief account of what had been done by himself and his wife at Maloga. It was sixteen years ago since he became impressed with the necessity of doing something for the blacks on the Murray. When he saw them there in great numbers, his heart was moved for them. Six years ago his wife and himself commenced teaching them. They fenced in some land where there was a large camp of blacks, and they built a schoolhouse, with the assistance of the subscriptions of a few friends. They had been going on with the work ever since. Of course they met with many difficulties in it, but they were prepared to go on with it. They found the old blacks go often away for a time, but the young ones submit to their authority and remain with them. Their daily routine was much the same every day except Sunday. They get up early in the morning, and they are taught in school from half-past nine till half-past eleven, and they are taught again in the evening. They meet for worship and prayer in the morning, and generally they all muster, except those who are sick. On Sundays they have service at eleven, and in the evening at six o'clock, besides the Sunday-school. He conducted the services himself, except when there were any visitors who desired to do so. The services consisted of singing, prayer, and reading the Bible, with such simple explanations as were suited to their comprehension. The principal work they did was on the adjacent stations and farms, at shearing or harvest times, or when they were mustering sheep. They were a lazy race as a rule, though some of them were industrious. The money they earned they took with them, and he went with them to Maoma or Echuca, where

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they bought clothes generally, and sometimes rations. They showed a great aptitude for learning, as a general rule."

"The Rev. J. Barnier pointed out that they were not a new association; many of them had subscribed for years to this Society. The papers submitted by the secretary would show that they had expended nearly £1,100, as against the £600 from the Government. They did not want to throw the burden entirely on the State, but only that the State should assist them by granting land, and by supplementing the subscriptions."

"Sir Henry Parkes (Premier) said the Government were deeply impressed with the sorry state of things, that nothing had been done for these poor aborigines, who had been sadly neglected and sadly injured. They had been subjected to every kind of injury, even to the destruction of their lives. We must all feel indebted to Mr. Matthews for what he had done; but the Government would have to devise some scheme, as far as practicable, to meet the interests of all the tribes in different parts of the colony. What the deputation had laid before him should be carefully considered, and before long the Government would submit a measure to Parliament, with a view to make some provision for the protection and support of the aborigines. He could assure the deputation that the matter would be very fully considered, and in the meantime the Maloga mission should not be left without support."

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